

# POEMS LYRIC AND DRAMATIC



ETHEL LOUISE COX



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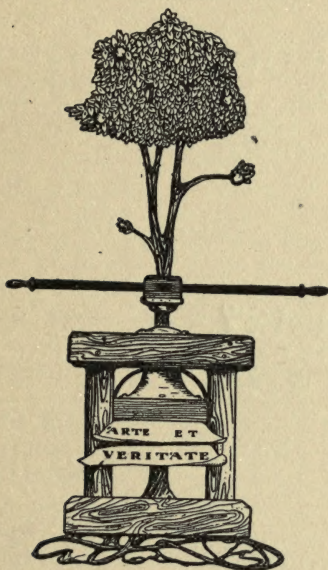
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# Poems

## Lyric and Dramatic

By ETHEL LOUISE COX



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## OVERTURE.

I who am not mine own but all the world's,  
Whether or star or glow-worm God has loosed  
To light a pleasant, June rose-garden flushed  
And green and full of lutes; a lamp within  
The rose: or silver planet making choir  
With constellations of the flashing heights:  
Shine, thus loosed, on the greening ways of  
earth.  
Light yours—not mine, since God has given it.



## THE HAMADRYAD.

The shepherd, Rhaicos, coming from the meads,  
The river-lawns where fed his snow-white sheep;  
Stretching his length beneath a mossy oak,  
Played, in the shade, upon his sylvan pipe  
Tuneful to the hushed bird amid the boughs  
That over-hung the bright grass and wild flowers,

Now let a golden sunbeam slip! and now  
A glimpse of blue sky shine! Idle, he played,  
Till looking up—ah, happy youth! what saw  
He by his side, upon the smooth, starred moss?  
A Nymph, a maid divine! if those white limbs,  
The wild-rose lip, and deep, soft fall of hair,  
Bespoke immortal race! The polished leaf  
Of oak, and acorns garlanded her brow,

Of forest green and grey her succinct robe ;  
And o'er her head a glittering, humming swarm,  
On gauzy wing, of golden bees circled  
And flitted : woodland odors breathed from her.  
Smiling, she gazed upon the wondering youth !  
But as he, boylike, longed to pluck the rose,  
And trembled and glowed towards her—she was  
gone !

And but the pressure of her dainty foot,  
Upon the moss, remained to tell of her !  
Unhappy Rhaicos ! while the slow dial passed  
From shine to shade ; and oped and closed the  
flowers !

Until the gods, with kindness looking down  
From higher splendor, would befriend the youth :  
And one warm-breathing summer noon, be-  
neath

The branching oak, he spied the unwilling fair ;  
Her white feet 'mid lush grass and lilies blown :  
And eagerness o'ercoming awe and dread  
Born of her beauty, wooed her with soft words,

And trembling passion. Waning, flushing, coy,  
She listened: then raising her eyes, she spoke—  
“Wilt thou love, Rhaicos? and knowest thou  
whom

Thou dost sue here?” “Naught know I save  
that thou

Art beautiful,” replied the youth, “For more,  
I’ll pray the gods who made thee fair that thou  
Mayest be kind!” “O rash and fond! wilt love  
A Hamadryad?” “Not a mortal maid!

Warm, blooming as thou art with lovely youth!

Nay, then I see that thou art all divine:

I swoon to touch that soft and flowerlike hand,

Or fondly gaze upon that bashful head;

For heavenly airs surround thee: nor hath maid

Voice like the music falls upon mine ear—

So sing the Muses. Not a mortal maid?

Alas, have pity! and my love shall prove

As deathless as the great days of the gods

Who know not how sweet ’tis to press some  
hand,



Or gaze into eyes that look back their love—  
As I look deep now into dear blue depths!  
O wilt thou love me? wilt thou even kiss?  
Sweet, with thy promise make me as the gods!"  
"Shepherd, and wilt renounce sweet mortal love,  
That runs through changing seasons, from blythe  
May,

Then summer, last autumnal days that end  
Where lie the daisies, for my kiss? ne'er sue  
A maid? bethink thee ere thou askest love.  
Pure must the tie be that shall bind our hearts!  
And dread the doom befalls inconstancy!"

"By Zeus and twinkling stars of heaven, I swear  
No life to have save what thy lips shall give;  
My heart held captive by thy sungilt locks  
Where summer lingers warm to kisses prest.  
Nay, fear not! be mine own as I am thine!"  
Swift came his vows! she harkened, for what  
maid

Denies belief when tears and sighs prove love?

And sank her blushing head upon his breast,  
And o'er them, happy, in the breezy ways  
The rosy Hours fluttered their light wings.  
A dial of flowers marked their perfect days.  
Like sunshine through the veins her presence  
was,

Or as the blowing of the south wind sweet  
From fleecy April cloud o'er fields of flowers:  
And bounteous life and beauty were her gifts,  
And gracious blisses Nature's self bestows.  
Thus exiled, earth-born hearts desire a love  
Beyond Youth's first shy stars: draw heaven  
down,

As slipped divinity from sparkling mists  
Before the shepherd startled unaware  
By rose-bloom, dazzling wire of locks bespread,  
A glory floating 'tween her foot and earth—  
Else 'twas the crocus on the greensward sprung—  
Idalian Aphrodite, runs the tale.  
They met at sunset, when the daffodil sky  
A throbbing star held, and the woods were still,

And balm-dews dropped from leafy branch and  
spray :

And "Love," she said, at parting, "Do not push  
Thy bride from thy thoughts when dost leave my  
side.

Wait, Rhaicos! wait—or thou shall't lose thy  
kiss!

Think then how lonely I await thee here,  
When woods are dim; and come to-morrow eve,  
An hour before the love-star lights the sky."  
She spoke, nor turned away from his embrace,  
That fond and faithful, stilled her gentle sighs.  
Ah! luckless shepherd! better hadst thou ne'er  
Known Music's charm, and silver-dropping  
showers!

For skilled was Rhaicos both with reed and  
song;

And 'mid his comrades laid along the sward,  
Each flower-crowned and friendly-emulous,  
He knew not when the twilight hour drew near,  
Nor saw the windy peaks flushed by the sun

Ere it sank in the misty ocean baths,  
Nor loosed the arm about his neck, nor heard  
The tongues of sheep-bells from the cloudy  
hills,

Forgot the hour assigned and bliss in store;  
But prompted by his rich and bounteous love  
Drew inspiration sweet from secret springs,  
Her leaf-hid charms and beauty undivined.  
And as he paused for breath a yellow bee,  
A bustling elf of May-dews, cowslip leas,  
Buzzed o'er his head and hummed about his lips,  
And driv'n away returned with louder din!  
Till wearied, Rhaicos roughly brushed it off,  
Beat back the wingy messenger of love,  
That wheeled with angry dart and flew away  
Towards evening woods and the Thessalian oak.  
'Twas wounded and one fairy wing hung torn!  
But to the Dryad, faithful, it returned  
And showed its bruised wing to her gentle eyes.  
A shriek burst from her sad lips at the sight;  
And mournful breeze of lamentation filled



The green aisles of the distant, recessed woods!  
Then looking up Rhaicos saw the sweet star  
Set in the blue of heaven; and his heart  
Divining her despairing cry, he turned,  
Stumbling with hasty footsteps through the fern,  
And ran through green glooms of the forest  
glades,  
Forded the runnel trickling through wood-ways,  
And found the oak—the hoary trunk lay prone,  
With vine and hawthorn uptorn by its fall  
And shattered branches strewn upon the sod:  
Felled by no wind that ever blew from heaven.  
Nor answered gentle accents to his calls:  
Nor light and life revisited his eyes!

## THE DAISY.

Opest a golden eye in each white field,  
Sweet, simple flower! blossom by the way!  
No fragrance to the rifling breeze dost yield,  
As doth the opulent rose, but to the May  
Thy pearlèd leaf is dear! and starry head,  
Fed by clear dews, and sun, and ambient air;  
O'er the bright grass, in dazzling blossom spread,  
When all the fields with buds and sprays are  
fair!

A white lamb that adown the valleys strays,  
Folded 'mid lilies by the crystal stream;  
A ship upon a faery main, sea-ways,  
Afloat; a star of evening dost thou seem!

Lighting the vaporous twilight with thy sheen,  
Meek blossom! that breath'st of innocent hours!  
The rustling leaf, soft breeze, clear skies between  
Green gloom of boughs, and pastoral life of  
flowers!

## MUSIC.

Thy hand is on the harp-strings, and thy voice,  
A silver fountain of pure melody,  
Rises in sunny joy, in rapture free!

What whispers from the past breathe o'er the  
strings?

Magical odors, and an April breath  
From green fields where a lost breeze wander-  
eth?

Blue skies and silver leaf and bloom and scent  
With thy tones mingle; and a joy as shy  
As one faint violet lone 'neath the sky.

Until thy voice sinks with a twilight sadness:  
In the dim distance, memories steal, unheard:  
In the grey dawning, pipes a wakening bird.



Thy voice leaps like a fountain, sparkling bright!  
Then like a white swan on a winding river,  
It solemn drifts, slow-singing, chanting ever!

Unto my soul it speaks of bygone things,  
Of vague hope, of a splendor yet unknown,  
Of dim airs from a wasted planet blown.

Like Hebe, drops of nectar-fire thou pourest;  
Till frame we golden ladders to the sky:  
We drink and, god-like, think we shall not die!

Now, dropping from the skies, a songful bird,  
Content, thou singest, with old fields and bowers,  
The green grass, and the simple daisy flowers.

## MUTABILITY.

We prize but what we lose! could the spring stay,  
With its pure skies, perfumes, and rose, alway,  
Nor burn to summer bright—stayed that fair  
star,

A-tremble in the evening hush afar,  
Fixed in mild splendor in the purple sky!  
Would our hearts leap with the May morn? or  
sigh

With passion for that one white sphere? so fair,  
O Youth, wild, white swan of Life's sea! would'st  
e'er

Be, if we knew not that on some green day,  
Thou would'st flee far, on faery seas away,  
To visionary lands, and meadows deep  
In fabled asphodel, and mists of sleep?

## NARCISSUS.

Beside a little stream, upon whose tide  
The primrose trembled—crown and lovely  
leaves

Glassed in its crystal—on the dewy sward,  
'Midst budding flowers, knelt the youth, and  
gazed,

Fondly, upon the lucid wave that gave  
Back to his longing eyes, the image bright  
Of white brow, golden locks fallen upon  
His shoulders clear, the rose and lily of  
His cheek, and amorous, flower-like mouth. In-  
tent

Upon that vision fair, he let slip by  
Each rosy hour from dawn to eve. A bird  
Upon a nearby spray lighted and sang,

Warbling and fluttering in the light breeze 'mid  
White-flower buds: a golden butterfly  
Darted above, with eyed wings spread: the rose  
Oped wide, in fragrance, to the hovering bee  
Murmuring in her amber cells: and through  
The silver stream, the flitting fish winnowed  
The current bright: but all unheeding, gazed  
Love-lorn Narcissus on that beauty fair,  
Wave-born; and oped his lips, in sad lament—  
“O whether nymph of the clear stream, with locks  
Pearl-braided, lily-crowned, who from thy deeps  
And grotto cold, arisest to the marge;  
Leaving thy lilies for these pastoral flowers!  
Or bride of the Sea-God strayed from the wave,  
The glittering foam, and white flocks of the  
    deep,  
And plunging dolphins! Amphitrite art:  
Have pity on my love and sighs; and on  
My constancy that holds me here, forlorn;  
Afar from shepherd life. Sweetest, forsake  
Thy brimming wave for this fair, flowered lea!



Thy songs for my fond adoration! come!  
For if I may not have thy love, I die!  
Forget thy golden sands, and icy wave,  
Green-gleaming through the rushes: here are joys  
As sweet—and waiting thee, here kneeleth love!"  
He paused—and Echo, from the far, blue hills,  
Alone made mournful answer to him—"Love!"

## TIME.

A radiant child that o'er the blossomy lawn  
Wanders, a playmate of light shade, and wind,  
Of golden bee, and wild bird hymning dawn;  
Plucking sweet flowers, with a changeful mind!  
Pure violet, and lilies, golden leaf,  
Crocus aflame, all buds the butterfly  
Quivers above: sudden! beyond belief  
The sunshine fades between far boughs! the sky  
Is lost, and gloom the forest arches wild,  
Dense, silent, desolate in reedy deep!  
Night falls through dusk of ancient boughs. The  
child,  
Frighted and lost, drops its bright flowers, to  
weep!  
They die, and fade away like magic mist,  
Rose, beryl, sapphirine, and amethyst!

## REMEMBRANCE.

Like halcyons, drifting on a spangled wave  
Reflecting serene skies, whose bright wings lave  
In liquid pearl, and lovely necks entwine ·  
So thoughts of thee on memory's dark sea shine,  
And only come upon a quiet deep,  
With floating flower branch, and winds asleep  
With influence mild, and starry mystery,  
And soft reflections in the dreaming sea!

## PROLOGUE.

With chaplets of myrtle, and of the rose,  
My brows are bound; my robes of Tyrian blue,  
Color of the clear sky, fall from the clasp  
Of price, gleaming on one bare shoulder white,  
Beneath the careless strings of night-black hair.  
The golden lyre trembles 'neath my hand  
So soon to free its prisoned soul, to strike  
Its highest chords. Ye, in your places there!  
Arising, tier on tier before my eyes:  
Ye human faces, I have loved, and toiled  
And anguished for—and triumphed! ah! too  
loved!  
Too dear, with raptured eyes! Ye throbbing  
breasts!



And eager hands, half stretched to grant the  
prize,

The rods of lilies, tremulous, dewy-fresh  
With sparkling drops. Above is the blue sky,  
Empty, save for the sudden crane-flight, with  
Its clangor, from the marshes and the sea  
Lipping and whispering on the shining shore,  
'Mid shell, and spangle, and strange water-lives.  
O heaven and earth meet in this life! Look, still—  
Turn not your eyes away, because my breast  
Bursts with its sighs of hope and longing! bend  
Still on me all the love and praise ye speak  
Silently; while I wake the lyre's strings;  
My heart aflame with rapture! Hear me! This  
Hour is immortal, and we cannot change!  
One touch of showery, pearly notes—listen!

## PSYCHE.

O butterfly, darting from sweet to sweet,  
On glittering, rainbow wings! when hushed and  
dark,

All the dim season, shut in still retreat,  
Swathed like some mummied, Eastern king, didst  
hark

To sounds beyond? hadst still a hope? didst see,  
In dreams, blue skies, fresh flowers, and bloomy  
lea?

E'en so, my soul! at times a blinding ray  
Streams through wide doors upon thy mortal  
walls;

And gleams of Heaven shine upon thy way;  
A visionary glory on earth falls!  
And like the humble pris'ner, thy thought sings!  
And dreams of Paradise, and dazzling wings!

## LOVE AND YOUTH.

Vines robed it, with a tremulous, flickering  
green;

It stood o'erflowered with the rose between  
The sprays where oft a bird hung, with a note  
To which the mild sky, with one star afloat,  
Listened—the wall where we were used to meet,  
And talk, when May and Love and Youth were  
sweet!

Bursting in blossom! Could dumb stone feel  
pride

At your white hand upon it? thrill, beside,  
Under your heart beats? for the birds knew!  
each,

Warbling and wooing, matched your tender  
speech—

Bird-pipe and love-note to my soul! Still sing  
They 'mid their balmy boughs and blossoming;  
And stands the old wall, dream-like, 'neath sprays  
tost  
To breeze and sunlight—only we are lost!

## SLEEP.

Soft fall upon mine eyelids, gentle Sleep,  
Like rain of roses! though I wake to weep,  
Quiet my heart!

Bring on thy wings that peace that day denies,  
The dewy balm that with the morrow flies;  
And then depart!

Love hath its own sweet joy and dear delight:  
And Thought its aery blisses, fancy light!  
Dearer thou art!



## PROMETHEUS.

The Gods, above, within their shining fields  
A sheet of trembling blossom to the marge  
Of heaven's brooks gleaming beneath fruit trees;  
'Mid song and glow and fragrance of the rose,  
Stretched in Elysian ease, regard this world:  
Create and mar, at will; lift to their love  
Some dazzled and adoring shepherd prince!  
Seat him in power above the island kings:  
Till wanton falls he, in the lust of eye,  
Ruling his golden court; forgets the dues,  
The amber wine, and precious gums, lilies,  
Or dewy herbs, or sacred sacrifice  
Of the white oxen of the lowing herd,  
Allotted the Divinities supreme.  
Then fall the thunderbolts from flashing  
heaven,

Upon the race. Their children innocent,  
For ages, to vengeance are sacrificed!  
But I who love men only! love to death!  
I brave ye, oh, Olympians! and will leave  
This quiet vale of myrtles, and the fields  
Familiar, this sweet, still, pastoral life,  
The home, and household love, harvest, and  
    spring  
With murmuring bees, and balmy breath of buds,  
To struggle with ye for this race I love!

## LOVE.

Like trembling echoes of forgotten music,  
Faint, balmy odors of rose leaf, like dreams,  
The first bird notes by tremulous, glimmering  
    streams,  
Soft melancholy born of Beauty, light  
Of dazzling spheres, thou comest, spirit bright!  
O'er earth and sky thy light and radiance shine!  
On vales enchanted, breathing buds divine!

## THE FIRST KISS.

All through the fragrant evening ran a sound,  
A piping shrill and lone, the meek complaint  
Of some warm-breasted bird left desolate!  
And hearing, soft we parted the white boughs,  
Beneath a show'r of brittle, snowy leaves,  
And found, within, a little, empty nest  
Wrought fine and fair, and warm as a true heart  
For sheltering Love: her balmy cheek near mine:  
And frequent came that simple sound of grief:  
One wistful tear fell, and her bosom heaved!  
We turned amid the blossoms, dewy-sweet—  
And with a touch, eyes fell, and our lips met!

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

No more doth smile the blushing earth  
Since my love's gone to rest!  
She took the sunshine in her hair,  
The lilies on her breast;  
Bright roses died to make her fair,  
With glories of the west!

\* \* \* \* \*

The glowing leaves oped sweet for her,  
With silent pearls of dew;  
The violets, beneath her eyes,  
Sprung from the sod and grew—  
Gazing upon those azure skies!  
A sheet of tender blue!

The daisy shone beneath her tread  
In fields with blossoms drest,



Wooing the wind with lovely mirth;  
Now close each leaf is prest!  
No more doth smile the rosy earth  
Since my love's gone to rest!

## AN ANTIQUE GEM.

Borne swiftly by the dazzling chariot wheels,  
Her out blown hair starred with bright buds, her  
arms

Half loosened from her fragrant spoil of flowers  
New opened 'neath the honeyed dews, star-bright  
In her dark lover's arms, Persephone  
Shrinks frightened: all the glowing buds and bells  
Shut fast their golden eyes! their warm bloom  
pales,

Beneath the shadow of the wingèd steeds!  
And runs a shudder through the flowery earth  
At sight of beauty on the breast of Dis!

## LINES.

My tender song, fly from my heart away  
Unto that Lady whom Love honoreth;  
And flute and sing to her, my song, and pray  
Her to list to thy golden notes—Love saith  
Thy little wings she hears—as on a rose  
The bee clings, so with thy melodious close  
Seek thou a lovely haven on her breast,  
And rise and fall e'er, with its soft unrest.

My song, say to her that thy beauty grew  
From her eyes; and if sweet and innocent  
She find thee, thou dost dear delight renew  
Near her; from her meek loveliness is lent  
Joy to thy singing; and that Love our Lord—  
Most pitiful to him who holds adored  
Her gentle self—bade thee, with wish confessed,  
To flutter forth, and seek that Lady's breast.

## LOST LOVE.

From the green sward, the Spring will call the  
flowers,

With low voice of the wind: all faded forms,  
Brown stalk and withered leaf, will spring in  
bowers

Renewed, in dewy fragrance. Gilded swarms  
Of butterflies will float, on glancing wing!  
Once more, 'mid orchard boughs, the linnet sing!

But O fond soul, no more shall e'er return  
Thy fading May, the purple violet!  
Thy sun no more o'er blooms and sweet fields  
burn!

Thy looks on me are dim, thine eyes are wet.  
Love lost, and glittering youth untimely gone,  
Scant, lingering years remain for thee to mourn!

THE VOYAGE.

1600.

Set sail! and tempt the great deeps of the sea,  
Once more, friends of my heart! where blossoming,

In rosy waters, wild with tossing vine,  
With bud and golden fruit and lilies gemmed,  
With boughs hung with a rosy treasure, sward  
Set thick with flowers, and the fragrant air  
Flashing with wings, and sweet with gurgling  
songs

From tiny throats, the Western Isles shine bright,  
Over the glittering sea, our course set! for  
The world is opening out before us, rise  
The shining heavens to a higher sphere!  
And life is infinite! Here, ancient ways,



Old tales, known paths shut in upon us: here  
The street, and fountain, and old household talk,  
The quiet closes, and the doleful bell  
To toll the end of all things—there, the stretch  
Of boundless waters, and a widening sky,  
And great Hope leading us! Ye mariners,  
Bold brows, and brother hearts! let the wind  
take

Our sails, and white drifts foam about our side:  
Lift we one white star on our prow, and sail,  
Beyond this world, out on the sounding seas!

PAGE'S SONG.

Violets, earliest in the year,  
Cover a green bank bright with May:  
Ope, fragrant—an orb'd dew drop clear  
In each blue heart: gone in a day!  
But waits the bank all year for May!

One moment leant she on my breast—  
Then left the tremulous heart she thrilled!  
Pain followed her, my bosom's guest:  
But Love sings still, with rapture filled!  
And broods above the empty nest!

## LETHE.

Shadowy, glimmering, 'mid pale amaranths,  
The dim, mysterious stream went from its source,  
Deep in a sunless land, and to its side  
Pressed countless, pallid shapes. With hope, de-  
spair,  
And resignation meek, they stooped to drink  
Its mystic waters! when its bubbles touched  
The lip, they smiled in mute forgetfulness:  
And those who wept lingered—yet drank!  
Among  
Those faint shapes saw I, suddenly, her who  
Held my heart through all fires of anguish; veiled  
Her brow and breast save where the golden  
locks

Shone o'er one shoulder, on her passionate heart  
Lay lilies of white peace. She stooped—"O  
stay!"

I cried—"Drink not, love! lo, miserable we!  
All's lost—life, green fields of earth, sun and  
stars,

And our far palace by the blue sea! naught  
Remains but love—so we would have it, in  
Our pain and passion; and passed! in great light,  
And music—O the gods! the pitiless gods!  
Take not love, also! do not drink!" but she  
Came to my side, and kissed my brow, and  
called

Me by my name of past days, and raised to  
My lips the cup—"Drink, love," she said—her  
voice

Made melody to my soul as of old:  
Her eyes were veiled—"Drink!" "Do ye wish it,  
then?"

I cried, "Francesca, do ye wish it?" Sighs  
Shook the pale lilies at her breast: once more

She raised the dewy cup within her palms,  
The limpid water sparkled at its brim,  
"Drink!" said she softly—then tears fell within  
The chalice, mingling with the crystal draught!



IN SILENT NIGHT.

In silent night, the rose her glowing head  
Bows shadowy, and one lost pearl falls bright  
From 'midst her radiant leaves! The bulbul,  
led

By love, sings to her hushed heart his delight.  
The winds breathe soft; their gentle murmurs  
fail:

She hears and dreams. under her shining veil;  
And 'neath his love. she dawns, in answering  
light

## IRENE.

With rose-carnations breathing on the air  
The spices of the East, of bowers fair  
Where walked the Sultan's daughter, golden-  
veiled;

With milk-white lilies; roses whose sweets failed,  
Two days blown; with a silver, bubbling stream  
Winding, 'midst reed and iris, its bright gleam;  
Her perfumed garden blooms. The wicket wide  
Opes; but she walks not 'mid the lilies' pride!  
Yet she has left a glory on the grass:  
A beauty on the flowers that saw her pass,  
When, on the quiet eve, rose the first star  
Within the tranquil heaven blue and far!

## MAY MORNING.

Amid an ash-tree, bending o'er a stream,  
A little pool of quivering shade and gleam  
Half hidden by wild flowers, its waters bright  
By the breeze blown in curling ripples light,  
While ruddy leaves which from the rose-tree  
fall

Drifted adown its shallows; a sweet call  
I heard, a sudden cry, a sylvan note!  
A jocund voice upon the breeze afloat!

No sweeter note of gladness have I heard  
E'en when with warbling rapture of each bird  
Rejoiced the golden hours of infancy;  
When dawned the day in splendor, sympathy  
With every flower that trembled on the green:  
And this chance music of a joy unseen  
Mingling Delight with shadowy Memory,  
Will live, fore'er, in pensive thought for me!

## SPRING SONG.

Where boughs are glistening and white  
With dewy buds, and banks are bright  
With violets, a little spring  
Glasses green rushes, and bird wing  
That dips its silver breast and clear—  
With rosy hours, awakes the year!

Swallow! from blue seas, sunset-springs,  
Flying this way! pear blossom flings  
Wide star rays white; and orchard trees  
Dream of small nests, swung by the breeze,  
Thrush-note, and fairy pipe, and bee  
Murmuring a quiet melody!

## TRIUMPH OF DEATH.

When thou art gone the rain will fall ; the wind  
Blow its clear trumpet from the east ; the year  
From dewy April, bud and blossom twined,  
To the ripe season of still days, nights clear,  
Gold rinded fruit, and purple grape, and trees  
O'er-laden with Hesperian gold, acorn,  
And harvestings, and amber hoard of bees,  
Will slow advance. Still will the radiant morn  
Rise o'er the dewy earth ; live all delight,  
Stars, waves, and winds, and the birds' melodies,  
The crescent moon through wan clouds glittering  
    bright,  
And the long sighing of the perfumed breeze,  
Mysterious waters murmuring in the night :  
All Beauty, all Delight will, rich, live on  
When thou, who blushest Beauty's self, art gone !

## EARTH'S MYSTERIES.

There is a flow'r I love, I know not why !  
It springs when May slides, with a balmy show'r  
Of sweet buds, from a rosy cloud to earth,  
With star of eve and rose and butterfly ;  
And yearning tears oppress me when that flow'r  
Starts from the dewy sod, a lovely birth !

Could I tell where the rose of yestermorn  
Now blooms, where are thy kisses and thy  
tears,  
Whither the splendor-wingèd Hours fly,  
Then not unmindful I should cherish on  
That flow'r that under windless skies appears,  
The little flow'r I love, I know not why !



## SONG.

Love, honeyed rose, the breathing flower for all!  
But for me my tears, at her knees! the bee  
May find a ruby cup, a dazzling breast,  
To hover o'er, which the rapt bird sings to—for  
me  
The heart never to be possessed! the cold, sweet  
eyes!  
The moonlight beauty, passionless o'er my sighs!

## AN APPARITION.

Alone, beside the dying fire, I sat:  
Wind, rain without—hunger and cold within!  
When she came knocking—"Who is there?" I  
cried.

"Do you not know!" she answered, and came in,  
And knelt beside me, with my hands in hers,  
Hid in her beauteous hair; and then I knew  
Where'er she came from, what strange, faery  
land,

Beside a haunting sea, she loved me! could  
Not rest from me! but came gliding back just  
To see what sorrow now I suffer, draw  
My head within her arms, or kiss the new  
Scar on my brow—she loved me so! The fire  
Falls, raves the wind without, I sit alone:  
And she is queening it, at some court-feast,

Out there, shining 'neath torches; jewel starred!  
Beside the ancient Duke who wedded her,  
Last year—the world is hers! How the wind  
wails!

And comes a sound of sobbing on its breath!

## CIRCE.

From brake of roses issuing, she came ;  
Her white robes fluttering to breeze, and flower  
Set gem-like in the sunny sward : and passed  
To deepest nook of the dim forest old,  
A covert dusked from slipping, sunbeam gold  
O'er lilies white ; and where the fern and rush  
And ivy grew wild, 'neath the hanging boughs  
Breeze stirred above, in arches dark—where once  
A bird piped sweet and high and lone ! with trill  
Of elfin mirth ; below, in waters clear,  
Sweeping a little runnel, silver-bright ;  
With reed and flag flow'r nodding o'er its shallows  
Crystal. A sylvan pipe held she, shut in  
One white hand ; and ere long set it to lips,

Like buds of blush rose, and made melody  
 Strange, weird, bewildering! a trembling strain  
 That hushed breeze, bird and leaf; and filled the  
     wood

With dim enchantments! golden hazes! So,  
 Piping, she went: and slowly from the shades,  
 With laggard paw, and crouching back, and dim  
 Eyes wistful on her face, a wizard rout  
 Snouted, tusked, bestial! brutes, yet men in love  
 For their enchantress mistress came, strange  
     shapes!

And grovelled at her feet: the while she played,  
 Happy in power and charms! and longing for  
 The hour when she would snare Ulysses, in  
 Her toils of magic, and of loveliness!

## SONG.

Ah, why should sorrow linger in the rose?

Beam with the first star in the sapphire sky?

Dwell in the sparkling glance of her we love?

Ah, why should we be born to weep, to die?

True, heaven were best, but earth is flushed with  
June:

We love—but soon to death we, restless, turn:  
The flowering sod, the crystal star on high—

We pluck the flow'r, 'tis ours! starward we  
yearn.



## HYMN TO DIANA.

Where art thou, Queen of the sky,  
Shepherdess of heavenly flocks  
Wand'ring aery lilies by?  
Dost, with amber, floating locks  
Dripping from the crystal pool,  
Thy white limbs, immortal, cool  
In the rippling waters, 'mid  
Woodland nymphs, in forest hid:  
In the brakes where buds the rose,  
And the doves of Aphrodite  
Wing through branches gnarled, where grows  
Ivy tendril, spring the bright  
Lilies, rain-washed; while serene  
Light vaunts Deity, unseen?

Wand'rest by the purple sea,  
Where the frisking dolphins play?  
Or upon some grassy lea,  
Smooth and soft, where white flocks stray  
Feeding 'mid dew and sweet flowers,  
Dost thou spend thy honied hours?  
While thy nymphs, for thy delight,  
Weave in mazy measures light!  
Come, Belovèd! On the sea  
Hesperus, arising bright,  
Heralds thy divinity!  
Wander down the heavens white!  
Constellated flowers shine  
On the deep meads, crystalline.

## ORION.

When Morning oped her gates of pearl, and  
shone,

In tremulous and growing splendor, o'er  
The dawning east, and dewy earth, the sheets  
Of lily and the fields of daffodil,  
Green hills, and flower-sweet meads, and choirs  
of birds,

With music of the morning star and May;  
Looming against the misty, purple hills,  
Orion rose and journeyed towards the sun.  
Blind groping, stood he, with his feet in flowers,  
The mealy gold of meadow blooms, his brows  
\* Against the spangled east; and listened to  
A thrush that 'mid the valley lilies sent  
Its sweet morn music up to the clear sky.

The mighty bow swayed from his listless hand :  
His giant shadow hung on the bright grass :  
And slow his stumbling steps went towards the  
east

Over the dark earth, where Apollo soon  
Would climb the golden pathways of the dawn,  
'Mid song and worship and fore-running light.

WHITHER FLIES MY HEART?

Ah, whither flies my heart? I see again  
 The stream, the hill, the flowering garden trees!  
 And in the silence, some enchanted bird  
 Sings—her small, sheltered cottage see I—then  
 Comes the soft music of the sighing breeze.  
 No longer may her gentle voice be heard:  
 Her bow'rs are empty—and she dwells apart!  
 Ah, whither flies my heart?

Ah, whither flies my heart? the nightingale,  
 Each spirit of the spring, seeks its sweet mate  
 Upon the golden, visionary earth  
 Of dreams—with May, I linger in her vale,  
 But fields, and wood, and green are desolate!  
 No more for me triumphal love or mirth!  
 They've borne my love to foreign lands apart!  
 Ah, whither flies my heart?

## EPILOGUE.

'Tis ended! they lie dead there, side by side!  
His arm thrown o'er her head, whose great, gold  
    locks  
Hang, hide their faces from mine eyes. Now,  
    may  
I free her from his languid clasp—embrace  
Her neck—trembling to touch its snow! and kiss  
The rose-like lips, so flower-soft: may possess  
Her dead, who loved me not—never was mine!  
Lift the white lids, and wonder at the blue  
Heaven, shrouded from the light; and gather up,  
With tender hands, this fragrant, glittering  
    flood,  
Her hair—for they lie dead, there, in their love!  
And I live who have seen this hour advance,  
Slow, step by step, with shrouded eyes, until  
Its footfalls echoed, hollow, on our hearts.



So pure, so childlike in her sleep! Sinned they?  
Was the fault mine? or in this death-blind house,  
Walks Fate, gigantic, awful? Had I died,  
Who had not love or youth; and left the sun  
To them—were it well? Vengeance, tastes it  
sweet?

Beholding their white faces whom I loved?  
At least, they are at peace! for e'en 'mid death  
I see the hues of sorrow on her cheek,  
'Neath her shut eyes: and brother-like, he loved  
Me, ere he fell; knighted and given to God.  
Bring torches! lift them up, and bear them hence  
To the dim choir, where the sunlight falls  
In silver beams, the silence breathes of prayer,  
And the great angels burn, in glittering rows!  
Massed, breaking from the shadow, in gold  
light.

Cover the lovers with pale rose drift: lay  
Them side by side; and leave them there, with  
God.

Tread softly! for they lie as if asleep!

## SONG.

Lute strings, and rose, and blue sky o'er!  
In fifty years could we love more?  
Is't ay or no?

A star that bends, the mere above!  
What is our life worth without love?  
Wilt let love go?

A bee that seeks the rose in flower!  
And life is love, and love an hour  
Of Heaven, below!

ALLEGORY.

A lonely sea, my soul!  
 Land-locked 'mid mountains high:  
 Abysmal depths that roll  
 O'er gold and pearl—the sky  
 Far, clear above: a voice  
 When the waves plunge: but deep,  
 Silent, serene as sleep!  
 A lonely sea, my soul!

Thy love, a torrent bright,  
 A glittering, rainbow stream,  
 Down the white rocks takes flight;  
 With pearly foam, and gleam,  
 Falls to the silent wave  
 That breaks in diamond light,  
 From out the winter night—  
 The lonely sea, my soul!

## HELEN.

Across white seas, with storm and sweep of  
sails,

Men bore me, from flowery Ionian vales,  
To towered Troy; and my great beauty fell  
Like sunlight, dazzling, blinding, o'er their eyes,  
In my youth, honey-sweet! Most beautiful,  
Most hapless I! for now the clash of spears,  
The hollow, brazen echoes of wild war  
Roll o'er the plains, and stately walls of Troy!  
The Gods take part in the hot struggle! men  
And heroes perish, for my beauty's blight!  
And like the shrieking of storm driv'n sea-birds,  
Far, warning voices clamor over Troy!  
Hear thou, O Goddess who did'st make me prize  
To golden Paris, never let me see

Again him whose unsullied hearth I left  
To desolation: nor the faces loved  
Of that fair, noble kindred I have lost,  
Whate'er betide my beauty and my woe!

## SONG.

Come up from the red east, O sun,  
With the wild wind of dawn!  
Thy wondrous steeds awake and guide,  
In rosy steps of Morn!  
The fields are decked thy glance to meet,  
With flowers sweet.

Spread forth thy blushing light o'er all  
The spangled, orient sky!  
While faint and fail the golden lights  
Made heaven clear, on high.  
The world wakes; far each shadow steals  
From thy bright wheels!



MAGIC.

Bright streams her lighted casement on the night,  
Through dewy boughs—beneath her garden lies,  
Of rose, and lily bright, and starry eyes,  
Fair flowers of light! and here the moss-grown  
wall,

A-stir with quivering leaves! and at my call,  
Stone, mortar, hasp, circle of angry friends  
With wisdom of the world—"Begin! where ends  
This madness? will you list this song of roads?  
Nor think what love of the wild bird forebodes?"  
I think all these should not keep her! but know,  
This very night, if I would have it so,  
I might take her for life eternal! all!  
Soul, brow, still eyes, and heart—if I would call!

WILD ROSES CRADLE SOFT THE  
GOLDEN BEES.

Wild roses cradle soft the golden bees,  
Or daisies, silver cups of dew, or blooms,  
Bright blossoms of the fragrant orchard trees,  
Or lily, where in perfumed, starry glooms,  
The imprisoned wings, streakèd with gold, may  
gleam.

For orient pearls, and rosy, secret bowers,  
Murmur the banded lutanists, with sound  
As of soft rain on grass and joyous flowers!  
Of whispering winds, or dreaming seas profound,  
Or falling fountains, in a crystal stream!

## THE LAST CONQUEROR.

All my life long, I knew I must confront  
Him—but I never dreamed the hour so near!  
Beneath the golden sky, and orchard boughs  
Faint blossom flushed and musical with wings—  
When life, a stream, slipped down, a silver line,  
Past reed, and flag, and lily clear as air,  
Leaves crystalline, out, with a sudden foam,  
From the blue pebbles to the river's rush!  
The sea seen, far off, with its whitening sails,  
Its foam crests rushing in to flowery isles,  
Enchanted, on its breast. I never thought  
That, sudden, wild the trumpets would ring  
forth!

Would ope the empty, ringing lists! and in  
A misty dream, I should be set to meet—  
No paladin, or shining knight—but him

The horror of whose name the lightest shakes :  
The echoes of whose footfalls chill the heart—  
The Giant. Now, at last, 'tis to be done!  
No fainting! no wild outcry—if you will  
Clutch one gold bough to bear away—but turn!  
For he waits not for seeking: he is here!  
Here—and the sky is gone, and earth is lost,  
And the fierce trumpet blasts, and shrieks the  
wind,  
And all his mighty coming through the earth  
Resounds—his great arm rears—now, struggle  
up!  
Now, Tancred. pay the earth for all the bliss  
Hoarded and spent on thee: the battle comes!  
Hold fast—and meet him—and be overthrown!

## SONGS OF THE FOREST.

## I.

Fair star that bring'st the quiet eve,  
Soft ere the rising moon stream bright!  
Earth waits thy beam, star of hushed breeze,  
And balm, of pensive, shadowy light!  
Come, planet clear of closing day,  
Star of the homeward way!

Thou dost all gentle pleasures bring,  
Star of soft peace: home to its nest  
The wild bird; from sweet fields the bee:  
Dost lead the weary heart to rest.  
On youthful passion shin'st above,  
Thou silvery star of Love!

## II.

Now all the budded woods are green,  
And the deep, windy east flames bright,  
And buds in mossy ways are seen,  
Bright leaves, and lily cups of light!  
Pearled wind-flowers 'mid the grass are set,  
'Neath white boughs springs the violet.

Now flowers every sunny lea,  
And wild notes greet the dawning blue,  
From dewy sod and bright fruit-tree;  
And blossoms trembling joy anew,  
With azure leaf and balmy breath  
It starts from sleep, and the year's death.

## III.

Lo! the light shoots in the east!  
And the dawn breaks cold and clear:  
O'er the misty, sparkling hills  
The sun's blushing beams appear.



## ABSENCE.

Beneath thine eyes my happy eyelids fall,  
Nor can I take thy close, sweet kiss, nor call  
Thee "Dear Beloved!" nor say "I love thee,"  
In the heart-voice like the bird's melody;  
When thou art near, and thy sunlight's above  
My shadow—dew on my flow'rs—leave me,  
Love!

As the leaves tremble when the bird has flown,  
So my heart pulses when I am alone  
To live o'er, in sweet thought, thy last embrace,  
And dwell, in memory, upon thy face.

## THE QUESTION.

When ladies bright shall tempt thee with their  
smiles,

Their silver brows, sweet speech, and lovely  
wiles,

Wilt thou muse: "Dearer far to me her look

When she is silent: as a running brook

In mossy ways, her still voice: and her eyes

Downcast, and blush, and virgin fear, I prize

More than rose-lips, or glance of sunny eyes?"

## MAY.

Grass-green and flashing blue of May,  
With leafage, rose-bloom, ferny spray :  
A bower safe to meet together,  
Thick, green and flow'r flushed by the weather :  
Sunshine that, splendid, floats above  
The budding flowers—thy smile, Love!

## SONG FOR MUSIC.

Come to me in my dreams!  
Ah Love! the day is long  
That with sweet buds, perfume, and the wren's  
    song,  
Dawns glimmering at the lattice! sinks to rest  
Dim, silent, starry, in the rosy west!  
Come to me in my dreams!

Come to me in my dreams!  
I may not love thee! fear  
To meet thine eyes as in a mirror clear,  
In faery thought—but longing grows to pain  
To touch thy treasured hand! greet thee again!  
Come to me in my dreams!

But come to me in dreams!  
With memory of all sweet  
And silent places haunted by our feet,  
With dewy splendor of those morning skies,  
With the delight of meeting lips and eyes:  
Sweet! come to me in dreams!

## A THOUGHT.

Flow'rs, music are the slaves of Memory:  
And with a scent, a tone, they will set free  
Thoughts, too swift for slow speech, that like a  
    flower  
Fall at a touch! from rose-crown of the Hour!



## ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

First he who by such fearful, unknown ways  
Had come to that drear place of shades, of woe,  
Of lapping waters faintly heard, as in  
The night beside a lonely sea, strained 'gainst  
The gloom his longing eyes that saw faint shapes,  
The drooping head of Proserpine where clung  
One vernal bud, with honied, radiant cup,  
And Furies, by their pallid torches' shine,  
Shaking upon black night their horrent hair—  
But nowhere those belovèd eyes he sought!

So, mourning, struck the trembling harp-strings:

soft

The harp notes sighed with his unyielding sor-  
row!

But sorrow woke a mighty, echoing voice

That with the melancholy chords of earth  
Resounded; and the singer paused aghast,  
With fainting heart. Then soft and low, he  
played

A melody as waters whispering 'mid  
The standing sedges in a pool, and sang—  
With pauses sweet! of distant earth, of homes,  
And hearth-fires, and the fields of happy men,  
The swallow in the eaves, the spongy meads  
Eyed with sweet blooms, and blowing winds of  
spring,

Of golden harvests, and sweet slumber lulled  
By murmuring bees, and winds, and shepherd's  
pipe,

And all the happy music of the vales,  
Of simple life, and joys inherited,  
And humble beauty 'neath the evening star.  
So sang he; and a silence fell on all!  
On those who wailed, and on the fearful shapes  
Of woe and horror: and the breathing dawn,  
With pipe of birds, and rustling of green leaves,

Sweet scents from white fields blown, and amber  
skies,

Shone in that desolate place. Slow-stealing tears  
Fell from the anguished eyes, and pallid lips

Smiled as the tears fell: then with bated breath,  
He made a murmur sweet that was one name!

Hope, life, death, anguish, fear and ecstasy!

A cry that pierced high Heaven, and sank to  
Hell—

“Eurydice! Eurydice!” again,

And ever the lament—“Eurydice!”

Till Love took that name, and re-echoed it,

Through all the woes of Hell, “Eurydice!”

So ended. Soft, with mild looks bent on him,

Spoke the dark Lord of Hell, “Thou who  
bringest

Hope here where rules Despair! and Love where  
Fear

And Vengeance ride the blast! thou who didst  
bend

Thy painful footsteps, from the happy earth,

To misty fields, and ice-bound, desolate waste  
Untrod by living foot—hast conquered death  
And the dark grave through love. Return thou  
to

The fields of day; and thy belovèd one  
Shall follow—only look not back at her!  
Content thee with the sound of her light feet  
Echoing thine; for if thou dost look, wilt  
Lose her forever from thine arms! begone!  
Lo, thou hast wrung love from the iron breast  
Of Pluto—but the ancient Night resumes  
Her dreaded sway.” Ended the God, and rose  
A fearful wail from all the vales of Hell:  
From barren, frozen cliffs, and fiery pool;  
And the dread wastes, haunted by drifting  
shapes!

Then Orpheus turned and, singing, went his way  
Back to the gates of life; for thought he—“If  
I pour my heart’s great longing into song—  
And listen not to those soft footfalls! I  
May gain the light; and turn not round to clasp

Her whom I kissed within her shroud, in one  
Long, passionate embrace—then let the sky  
And earth crash in together!" So he went,  
Hearing, in anguish, her light footfalls, near;  
Her sighs heaving her bosom with desire  
And tender longing—nay, at times almost  
Halting, hushed, hopeful, for her arms to close  
About his head, with kisses wild and sweet,  
And sad—as men embrace the fancied dead  
Who rouse to life from three days' trance, and  
look,

With alien eyes, on the affairs of life.  
So sang he: but it chanced that to his lips  
There rose a little song that he had made  
Beneath the glimmering rose of the bright eve  
When the veiled bride was brought home to his  
doors,

With chants and wreaths and dazzling chariot  
wheels;

And this he sang, unthinking, with full heart!  
Yet smitten with a sudden fear if this

Were his fair wife, or a thin, aching shade  
That followed, light? dear either way! but  
longed

He utterly for her loved eyes and lips,  
And tender voice: and he sang, he heard  
A passionate sigh that, dying, breathed his name;  
And knew her near him! Pierced with the faint  
sound

Of her remembered tones, and with the thought  
She sorrowed to have come so far without  
Sign of his love, he yielded! Joyful, awed,  
Thrilled with divine love, he turned back, and  
looked

With blissful tears at his Eurydice!  
And leapt a cry, and stretched their longing  
arms

In fond joy: but ere they had looked their fill,  
Or kissed, back sank the lovely shade in night!  
The gentle gift was caught back to the Gods!  
No more to earth returned Eurydice!



## A DREAM.

I had a dream of roses, and of buds  
Of April, honey-sweet, of hyacinth,  
Of trembling bells, of lilies in whose plinth  
The bee hides, pastoral daisies, field stars sweet!  
O'er which hover clear dews, and gold wings  
fleet!

A dream of meadows fair as Paradise!  
Windless, and blossoming with flowery eyes!

## BIRD-FLIGHT.

First fled the swallow, Youth, that wings away  
With budding rose, and halcyon hours of May:  
Then Love, the enamored nightingale that sings,  
In myrtle bower enchanted: then fleet wings,  
'A sky of daffodil, and Hope had flown:  
Last, chanting, the swan, Memory, had gone,  
Drifting down silent waters to the sea  
That rises and ends in a mystery!

## SINGING.

My song, be like the violet  
That trembles bright  
Upon a nodding bank exhales  
Its perfume light!

My song, be like the star that gleams  
In deepest blue,  
'Neath which the faint rose, odorous, glows  
In radiant hue!

My song, be like the mourning bird,  
That with its love  
O'erflows lush boughs, with couplets soft  
As voice of dove!

## CONFESSION BEFORE DEATH.

That night of the Duke's solemn feast, we met,  
Unseen. She paused—I heard her murmur low  
My name. "O lady, what will ye of him  
Whose very heart beats in your service?" Mute,  
Beneath her glittering veil, she stayed a pause  
Sweeter in tremulous silence than the voice  
Of Music! then she spoke—"Here is a world  
Of men and women—not one knows of that  
Great, golden chalice, sacred passion that  
Our lips desire! lo, standest there—not thou  
But Love! Love, radiant, blinding! Kneelest  
thou?

Must I speak further? lips utter the tale  
My heart hath beaten at thy slightest glance,  
The lightest, lingering touch of thy hand? Rise  
Thou—take me! here is anguish, here despair!  
But here is life immortal—deathless love!"

THE SHEPHERD.

I.

LAST NIGHT.

Last night, I heard the nightingale!  
It waked me from a dream;  
From leafy bow'rs rang its sweet wail,  
'Neath the moon's amber beam,  
Last night, I heard the nightingale!

Last night, I heard the nightingale!  
I woke and wept for love;  
It mourned amid the blossoms pale;  
White stars looked from above;  
Last night, I heard the nightingale!

## II.

## SUNSET.

The sun goes down, far in the west,  
And leaves woodland and vale to rest:  
Thou weary heart, what tears are thine?  
'Mid glittering mists, and the clouds' shine,  
The sun goes down!

## III.

## NYMPHS AND SWAINS.

By the streams, in meadows fair,  
Did I meet my love a-playing!  
In the spring, when lovers young  
'Mid the green wheat fields were straying!  
Pipe, sweet shepherd! life's a pearl  
Trembles for a lovely hour  
On the leaves of summer's flower—  
Vanishes then, us betraying!  
While our hearts with Love are maying!

## THE HESPERIDES.

Thick-foliaged, with a sunlight silvered bole,  
Deep with winged, tremulous leaves, bright  
with clear dews,

And musical with songs of the soft breeze,  
Aflame with glowing buds, and blooms, and  
fruit

Sparkling in green glooms, lifting boughs a-sheen  
Beneath the sky of dawn, and rosy light,  
The magic tree stood, circled by the fair  
Hesperides. Leaf-shade and blossom touched  
Their white limbs, shone upon a gleaming arm  
And thick folds of gold hair: above them soared  
The dazzling dragon-head from its bright coils,  
Crowned with pale fire of silver light o'er all  
The jewels of its shining wreath: and sweet,  
From out the clustering bud and blossom, came



Their voices faint drifting with fragrant winds,  
Seaward; as under star, and leaf, and fruit  
Golden upon the bough, they guarded safe  
The magic tree, from root to bowery head.

SHE BEARS A JEWEL ON HER BREAST,

She bears a jewel, on her breast,  
Not clearer than her eyes! a light  
Still, emerald! a splendor bright,  
A lustre strange! In her calm face  
There lives the memory of that place  
Where she dwelt long, in mystery,  
The misty radiance 'neath the sea,  
The dark joy of the mountains, chill  
And ice-crowned, the light of the still,  
Clear moon, and the wild song of death  
A lover sang, with failing breath!

## THE ROBIN.

Voice of the dawn, minstrel of vernal days,  
Pitiful spirit of old, plain romance,  
Thou cheerful gossip of the beechen ways,  
Love-lutanist, whose sylvan notes enhance  
Delights of May! among the gusty trees,  
Thy blithe cries utter! echoed from each glade  
That flings a warm perfume to the soft breeze:  
Wing, fluting through the golden lights and  
shade!

Silent, dost bob and dance, on orchard lawn,  
In rustic minuet! with golden bill,  
And shining eye, and happy grace. Each dawn  
Hears thy blithe calls from sylvan green and hill.  
Loved wast thou of old poesy, blest bird!  
Spirit of wood and field! and that sweet art,

That finds fair thoughts in every flower, heard  
Thy friendly voice, and gave to thee a heart  
Of heavenly true love unto mortals, whence  
Flowed pity, woe, mysterious reverence!

## NIGHT SONG.

Silence, O fond bird, that from leafy bower,  
Star-hung and perfumed by the odorous breeze,  
Pourest thy sweet notes in a silver shower,  
A crystal rain of dropping melodies!  
The flow'rs awake beneath the sparkling cloud  
That earthward bends with fragrant, gentle dew,  
A shining mist above the green hills bowed  
Till morn, ascending, blushes in the blue.

Soft, soft, ye airy voices! wandering  
Mid moss-grown paths, and folded bud and  
    bloom,  
Beneath the golden whirl, the glittering ring  
Of sister stars; in leafy secret gloom,  
A stream makes music, and winds answer light;  
And dreams the tremulous lily; and above  
Sings the enamoured spirit of the night  
That radiant, faint with blossoms, breathes of  
    love!

PERDITA.

With faintest sunlights in thy hair  
Of gossamer gold, and still, blue eyes,  
Thou comest when the moon is old,  
And thickest dark obscures the skies.

Thou lookest on me, and thine eyes  
Are still and soft and dewy-clear:  
Thy footsteps echo, angel-wise,  
Upon my memory's shadowy stair.

Until the Past awakes, and rings  
With sunken faery bells again:  
The fount of youth enchanted springs:  
And nightingales sing in my brain.

## VISIONS.

From dreams of thee I wake,  
When night is o'er!  
With thoughts of thee I greet the light;  
And all the memories of the night,  
Like faint scents of pale violets dead,  
Like sweet notes when the music's fled,  
Hover about my waking hours;  
A fragrance from enchanted bowers!

From thoughts of thee I turn,  
When day is o'er!  
Sleep brings a vision to my eyes,  
And stirs my beating heart with sighs;  
Till love and life and all delight,  
Like an embowered rose, in night  
Are lost: joy wings: and all things die  
Save only thee and memory!



PHOSPHOR, HESPER.

O Morning star, that sparklest in dawn's blue  
Above the beds of violets and dew,  
With soft delight my love's sweet breath renew.

O Evening star, that where the west is bright  
With rose lights, hangest, harbinger of night,  
Pilot her sleep from dark to dewy light.

## PERSEPHONE IN HADES.

Drooping upon her throne, Persephone  
Eyed with dim looks the brooding darkness  
near;

And heard the river eddies rippling led  
To misty banks of amaranth and pale  
Lilies of faint Elysium; and her heart  
Passioned for meads of Enna, flower-sweet!  
Young buds, and dewy flowers, and the dome  
Of the blue skies, the faint star of the morn,  
Clear drops of dew, the song of soaring birds  
In the white dawn, and odor-breathing winds:  
Dreaming, she listened for voices of nymphs,  
In pleasant vales, and river lawns. Beside  
Her, leaned dark Pluto, and his trembling words,  
Whispered her close and sweet, were all un-  
heard;

With promise of fair flowers as she lost  
'Neath kinder skies—rose leaf and daffodil!  
Of all the splendors of the halcyon earth—  
So she would lift her fainting head! and 'neath  
His kiss, the last flower clinging to her locks—  
Sole coronal of lorn Persephone!  
Fell, with a shower of loose, odorous leaves!

## DREAMS.

## I.

One lonely bird that sings the rose,  
A heaven of stars, a bee-like throng,  
A breeze that o'er the lilies blows  
And wakes them with its swaying long—  
Is it dawn? or a vision of the night?  
I cannot see for orchard blossoms bright  
Fluttering before mine eyes! Heart, is it dawn?

## II.

Let me dream.  
Is it true I may search the world, nor find—  
Wake, hopeful, with blue skies of dawn, grope,  
    blind,  
At night—her that stood here but yesterday?  
Let me dream!

Let me dream!

I may find, say you? turf with daisies white—  
Nay, but she glides in to me with the night;  
And with the birth of dawn she steals away—  
Let me dream!

### III.

Green branch that thrusts its buds against the  
blue  
Roof o'er us; moss banks violet wove, anew,  
By spring; thy vesture all of flowers; day  
Astir in the dim tracks and greenwood way:  
The forest creatures near—the world afar!  
Rich purple—silken silence—and a star  
In heavens blue, Love o'er us! Men are gone?  
Look down, my soul! through life and death,  
look on!

## JACOB AT PENIEL.

When night climbed the dim sky, he crossed the  
ford

That eddying, sparkling, lay 'tween bank and  
bank;

And stood beneath dim cedar boughs and shades  
Of myrrhy thickets. O'er the dark earth hung  
One white star, 'mid thin mists: a sudden  
breeze

Went, breathing fragrance, through the gloom.  
Sounded

A rushing wind of winnowing wings, and lo!  
As in the dreadful glory, turned the seer,  
A glittering form stood in his way: and by  
The river-ford, they wrestled through the night  
Till paled the eastern star. Rock, tree, and sky

Swam in their eyes, with beating blood, and  
white

The silent skies stood over them! Their limbs  
Locked in their struggle, till the sinews vast  
Were knotted, and veins started: their long  
locks

Clung mingled: and the earth slipped from their  
feet:

And rent the stranger's robes that smelt of  
myrrh,

Were whiter than field-lilies! As he strove,  
Did Jacob see the wrestler's countenance,  
Dazzling, above him; and his starry dreams,  
And skyey visions shone before his eyes,  
While chilly fear urged him to loose his grasp  
From the unearthly; but his manhood rose  
In riot of hot blood! So all the night  
They wrestled by the ford: when the clear  
dawn  
Streaked the blue east, the stranger spoke and  
said,



"Thou hast prevailed, O mighty heart: loose  
me:

For the dawn comes." Yet Israel cried,  
Amid the weariness and grief of strife,  
"Thy blessing, Lord!" and o'er his bowed head  
lay

The haven of vast wings; and on his soul.

## MAY AND LOVE.

In spring, with breath of violets,  
 My hopes bright blossomed, in mild air,  
 'Neath rosy cloud, and fragrant dew,  
 Soft sky, and sunny radiance fair!

Now blow the winds through dreamy woods,  
 And dim the cloudy, sunless sky;  
 And with the withered leaves of spring  
 My hopes drift from the bough to die!

## PANDORA.

With fearful wonder, raises she the lid,  
And through the sunny air, o'er her curled head  
With violet and crocus garlanded,  
As light as mazy rings of butterflies  
The gifts and blessings to mankind flutter  
On rosy, quivering wings; and vanish, bright,  
Above the reach of empty, longing hands!  
But on the fairest shuts the prisoning lid,  
As with divine regret, and holy fear,  
Pandora gains for earth the struggling hope!  
To work with hope—sweet task! golden content!

But, kindly Gods, no gift gave ye to those  
Who, hopeless, toil! Then grant them, O Immortals,

Your dauntless mind, and steadfast, heaven-born  
courage,

To live on the dark earth as ye live in  
Celestial, glittering halls of bright Olympus!

## TO-MORROW.

Wilt thou bring to me what To-day denies,  
O sweet To-morrow? sleep to weary eyes,  
And joy and hope? I give To-day a tear;  
But unto thee, To-morrow, thou more dear!  
I lift the silent hope the blossoms know  
When o'er their bedded seeds moist spring winds  
    blow;  
And the sod fed with bright dew trembles green,  
'Neath flame and blue of skyey deeps serene.

LOVES OF THE GODS.

I.

Look from thy beaming sky, O Phœbus! now  
While thy wild steeds advance, thy glorious  
brow

Shines on the budding fields of earth. Hast  
seen

'Mid all fond looks, of birds in bowers green,  
Flower face, and mortal eyes, this heart of light  
Enchanted! passionate, sun-like flower bright  
That, constant, turns to thee its shining head,  
Till all thy rosy, ebbing glow is fled;  
Up to thee spreading each bright, restless leaf,  
With virgin mind bending 'neath tender grief?  
O wanderer of the skies! O singer sweet  
To festal harpings clear for flying feet,

Of liquid chords, and lovely poesy  
Honey sweet, joyous sounds, and revelry:  
O Child of Heaven! beautiful and wise  
With occult knowledge! Harkener of sighs  
Of souls foreboding! Lord, thy heavenly art  
Once more, hath drawn to thee a virgin heart!  
Look down, gold-quivered son of supreme Jove,  
To the dark earth, where shines a humble love.

## II.

In yellow skies fair Hesper heralds night,  
O'er valleys low raining his lovely light,  
On fields, clear streams, arbors, and thickets  
    wild  
Eyed with the sweetest flowers. With radiance  
    mild  
Bright Phœbe rises. Her pale crescent gleams  
O'er the dim forest old—pensive, she dreams  
Its shadow that of Latmos; and its deeps  
The forest brakes where her Endymion sleeps,  
'Mid store of lilies, ever fair and young!  
To rest by feathered, warbling choirs sung!



## SONGS.

## I.

Tears I weep that none may know!  
At the mountains gaze I ever,  
At the heights where lies the snow,  
Where my wandering feet roam never:  
Clouds glide, and the bird flies there,  
Radiant sunsets hover fair!  
Longing, gaze I from below,  
Tears I weep that none may know!  
Tears I weep!

## II.

My heart was like the sun,  
When dreamed I that you loved me!  
My heart was like the sun,

Glittering, golden, streaming radiance o'er  
 The trembling buds, sweet leaves folded be-  
 fore—

My heart was like the sun!

\* \* \* \* \*

My heart is like the sun,

Now you have ceased to love me!

My heart is like the sun

When, slow and fair, he sinks down from a sky

Whence all the glories, and wild radiance die—

My heart is like the sun!

### III.

A cottage, small and fair, she has;

And over it I see

One serene star! white lilies silently

Shine in its light: a magic splendor gleams

In each pale calyx, glimmering in her dreams.

### IV.

Turn back, O heart; from icy peak and height,

From misty torrent, waters glittering bright,

Unto thy native land!

There springs the violet, in bourgeoning vale,  
 And white flocks move, and gentle winds pre-  
     vail,  
 Within thy native land!

## V.

In a dream, I saw a maiden  
 By a fountain bright  
 That flowed, sparkling, 'neath boughs laden,  
 Magic leaves, milk-white:

Pale her cheek, her eyes were wild!

Yet on me, she gazed and smiled!

In a dream.

In a dream, I heard her sing  
 Songs enchanting sweet!

Combed she her locks, glittering

Down to her light feet:

Fairy of the fountain, she!

And she lured my soul from me!

In a dream.

## VI.

My little songs, return to me!  
With doves' wings fluttering on my heart!  
Too long, I pine and sigh apart!  
With faint notes of a fairy song,  
Forgotten, rising clearer—throng,  
On shining pinions, hither: tears  
Well from my heart oppressed with fears:  
My little songs, return!

## VII.

O nightingale! O nightingale!  
Deep in the dim woods dost thou sing;  
And streams of lucid melody  
Up from thy sad breast spring!

O nightingale! sweet nightingale!  
In leafy covert dost thou mourn,  
Till fade the star-flowers from the skies,  
Before the crystal dawn!

## VIII.

Love sings among the roses!  
The silent moon above,  
The quiet flowers listen,  
And dream and breathe of love:  
Love sings among the roses!

Love sings among the roses!  
No rustle stirs the fields  
Fragrant with radiant blossoms!  
My breast to deep joy yields!  
Love sings among the roses!

## IX.

In the clear water at your feet,  
There lies an image sweet!  
Some lovely water-nymph for thee  
Has left her pearls and foam of sea!  
Here, at your feet, she weeps and sighs;  
White garlands blind her eyes:

I draw you back—and she has fled!  
The wave flows clear o'er the stream's bed!

## X.

Day fades away, as sweet exhalet  
The fragrance of the rose!  
The nightingale begins its song,  
Through clouds a clear star glows:

And silent all the radiant day,  
My song, with fresh delight,  
Echoes the nightingale; and blooms  
With the rose dewy-bright!

## XI.

What sings the wondrous maiden?  
Soft flows the crystal Rhine!  
Her locks with lilies laden;  
Her beauty half divine!  
The gleaming harp, upon her breast,  
Soft trembles in its lovely rest!

What dreams are on me glowing?  
My heart beats loud and fast!  
Wild melody is flowing  
From her lips! O at last,  
Let life and golden day go by—  
I sink upon her breast to die!



## FLIGHT OF POESY.

Thou dost evade my love: upon the air  
The rose-leaves blown back from thy glittering  
hair

Show me the way did'st pass: when thou art  
gone,

Unwatched by me, uprises the clear dawn!  
Joy flies, and Fancy pales, and Memory  
Vibrates with tones I love, silent for me!

My idle harp falls from my hand: still sing  
Its murmurous chords struck by thy rainbow  
wing:

And I may find thee in the depth of June,  
With blossomed leas and blackbird's silver tune;  
Where thou dost watch, all day, the running  
brook

Sungilt o'er pebbles blue, in leafy nook.

## ELFIN-TOWN.

Faint, elfin horns that herald magic day;  
A rosy dawn above a forest wild  
Dream haunted by the memory of a child;  
Rose lattices, white-glancing, aery towers  
Of wings of butterflies and silver showers;  
Walled gardens, blossom-flushed, fruit hung,  
    with trees  
That spring to sound of faery melodies;  
Great flowers that glow and shine, a jewel bright  
In each heart, violet banks, and moth wings light;  
Birds on the glistening boughs; a flying mist  
Of rainbow gold, and green and amethyst,  
Like great wings, flashing o'er, of painted birds;  
Moonbeams, bee songs, strange trees, and magic  
    words;  
Soft tones that love, and yearn afar, and weep,  
With rippling, faery seas, and winds asleep!

## BRIDAL SONG.

Pluck daffodil, lily and violet blue,  
The pure rose brimming with the rain and dew!  
All vermeil buds and flowery sweets adorn  
Love's high festivity and happy morn!

Sing, pretty choirs, that in each hedgerow green  
And fair branch gemmed with budding white,  
are seen!

Thrush, linnet, blackbird pipe, in bushes gay,  
To welcome in the blushing bridal day!

Rise, Phœbus, from the mist and spangled blue  
Of dawn! ascend the crystal heavens anew!  
Haste, rosy Hours! and weave a garland bright  
With young Loves on the dial of their delight!

## CLEOPATRA.

## I.

## CHANT FOR THE TEMPLE OF THE GODS.

O holy powers that sway our lives!  
O mysteries!  
Thou, Isis, veiled from mortal eyes:  
Osiris, to whom from blue skies  
The soul descends—great deities!  
Before ye the heart trembles; and life hears  
The sullen wash of seas across the years  
That hedge us from eternity.

Not ye will passionate chant, or gums,  
Sweet perfumes rare,  
Or virgin beauty rosy glancing  
From glittering veils, in dance advancing,  
Propitiate, as offering fair!

But humble hearts and lives divinely led,  
Star-like, shall light our way among the dead,  
Unto your throne-foot, deities!

## II.

## SONG.

Faint scents like dreams, and perfumes sweet  
That with winds from dim islands beat,  
Fragrant on glittering seas, with white  
Lotus half-opened on the night,  
Waft with her sails silken, gold-bright!

Music attends her, and the sea,  
Beneath her oars, glides silently,  
And perfumed winds her white veils lift  
That to her jeweled ankles drift—  
Beauty, star-like, shines through the rift!

## III.

## ANTONY'S SONG.

Men gaze unto the East for dawn! and there,  
Where one dim, slender palm rears, branching,  
fair,

'And burning skies glow o'er the milk-white  
sands,

My trembling heart returns from other lands—  
Unto the East I look, and long for thee!

Heart, there is magic in the East! a charm  
Of strange herbs, flowering trees, and fragrant  
balm

Of lilies where the serpent coils—and there,  
On the great Nile, a Lotus blossoms fair!  
'And from the East, the East! it shines on me!

## PHANTOM.

Beneath the white moon silvering the branch  
Of the wild rose-tree where a bird still sings;  
Where odors rise from flushing blooms that  
    blanch  
In the pale beams; and the breeze, with light  
    wings,  
Hovers o'er blossom'd banks; her ghost will  
    walk,  
A faint mist 'gainst the splendor. Lovers met  
In the white May, will pause from gentle talk,  
Feeling dim sorrow, or the violet  
Sweeter in fragrance—that hour she is near;  
Returning to the bowers of the year.



## JACOB'S DREAM.

On the wide plain, beneath the vault of heaven  
Flashing with stars, he slept; where three dim  
palms

Reared soft, o'er the white sands, against the  
sky.

The winds were hushed; and every leaf was  
still;

And crouched the lion in the river's bed,  
The silver water-course parched by the drought,  
Amid its whispering reeds and water-plants,  
And small, eyed flowers blue as skies above:  
And lo! across the glittering march of stars,  
The serried ranks of planets burning red,  
Clear globes, and gleaming moons, and golden  
lights,

A glorious vision dawned! The heavens oped,

And slid an amber cloud from sky to earth,  
With silent love and benedictions bowed;  
And down its misty way descending soft,  
Came white-winged angels, harnessed Cherubim,  
Hosts, principalities, and heavenly powers,  
Descending and ascending, with bright gifts,  
With starry flowers, and heaven's dewy fruit,  
And palm, and living waters, to the earth  
From heaven, and from earth to the bright  
skies.

Beautiful shapes, with radiant brows! and o'er  
The flying mist, a solemn harmony  
Of lutes and viols and angelic voice  
Built ever that bright link from heaven to earth  
Hushed, dream-like, 'neath the blessing of the  
Lord!

## SAPPHO.

Whene'er I take my lyre in hand to sing,  
Before me all those shining ones, my peers,  
Crowd my dark roof with splendors. "Low the  
string!

What matchless music hast thou for our ears?"  
They seem to ask who wear on perfect brows  
The laurel of immortal song still clear  
'Across long Time: nay, but delicious vows,  
First, trembling words of love ye well may hear,  
Great Ones! triumphant rings the lesser voice;  
Love pours the notes, bids fiery strings rejoice!

## WOMAN'S LOVE.

## I.

As girls will often slip into the breast  
Blue violets that, dewy-scented, prest  
'Above the heart make maytime of the day;  
So I will bear those lines you wrote that say  
"I love thee"—let their silver tones unite  
With my heart's singing like a bird, at night.

## II.

Dearest, I love thee so that fain am I,  
Now I have given to thee my stiller hours,  
To look thence to May-blooms, a bluer sky,  
And pull my childhood back, with its pure  
    flowers  
Held in innocent hands, and give it thee  
Who henceforth canst ask all my life of me.

## III.

What canst thou ask of me I will not give?

A tress, soft severed from its azure band,

The rose I wore, lips where thy name doth live

In sanctuary of dreams, my thoughts, my hand,

The pearl-string of my joys—stars of the mor-  
row,

And here—Belovèd, I give all! my sorrow!

## MELODY.

Once more, that melody of sighing strings!  
And to its mournful music lend your aid,  
Soft voices! so, on my belovèd's breast  
My weary head may sink to gentle rest;  
And the dim anguish that my sad heart wrings  
Be stilled; and every haunting mem'ry fade!  
Peace with its tender music lingereth!  
O let me listen, and dream on to death!

## PIPES AND DANCERS.

But if men will not look upon them! see,  
With my delight, my treasures spread them,  
here!

White, tremulous buds that 'neath the tides of  
sea

Wave, blue and amber gems of the East, clear,  
Bright Indian birds from vales of Paradise,  
Fruit rosy and in golden clusters, grown  
On cliffs and peaks of glittering isles; their eyes  
Gaze not on, with bliss! and when all is shown  
That filled my galley of the purple sail,  
They will not hear of the strange trees, and  
groves,

The flashing blossoms, and the sunbright vale,  
O'erflowing with the melody of doves,



To which I floated, on a misty stream,  
Where asphodels bloom: and if then I sing  
Filled with the magic music of a dream,  
They will not hear! nor wear fern seed! nor  
    wing,  
With white sails, down clear seas! nor listen  
    while  
Trees spring to Orpheus' lute! My brows are  
    bright  
With jewels from the elfin land—but smile  
They; and refuse my offering of delight!  
They know no kingdom of a magic isle!

## THE CRUSADER.

A speck upon the far, blue sky aglow  
With sultry heat! here is the desert spring,  
'Neath the date tree! the fountain bubbling clear,  
Cool, crystal, sparkling from the white rock, o'er  
The drifting sand. Here is the pleasant spot  
They told me of where I may rest, the nook  
With fine grass, flowers, and palm trees, o'er-  
head,

Breaking the sky's fierce sapphire! Fairy trees  
And dream-like vision of a covert green,  
Still, cool, and peaceful, it appears to eyes  
Dimmed by the blaze of sunlight! I will loose  
Bridle, drink, stretch my limbs beneath the  
shade

That lets a thin, gold stream flicker upon  
My hauberk, purple scarf, and jeweled hilt;  
And list to that sweet bird above my head,

My journeyings are near at end, I trust,  
If all they told me be true—simple folk  
Who set me on my way here, from the hills  
Low 'gainst the great moon. I shall see God's  
town!

I, all unworthy! O sweet saints, how oft  
Upon the wide plain's verge a vision hung,  
An aery, mimic city of the East,  
White towered, ranged with splendid palace  
walls,

With cloudy arch, and dome a lily clear,  
Or hovering, dove-like, 'gainst the rosy skies,  
The ghostly town of my hopes! Shall I see,  
Kneel, touch, kiss holy dust? I trust 'tis so.  
I have striv'n, hungered, suffered from the  
beasts,

Fought with men, beast-like, robbers; wounded,  
fall'n

Beside the way; and I have done Thy will,  
O Christ! though haply not among the chaste  
Have I been numbered, who have loved my life

O'er-much, have lived great feast days, kneeled  
to one

Gold idol, mistress of my heart, flower-sweet—  
But not of Thine! Idle, at best, I lived,  
Stringing my verse, a milk-white pearl on pearl  
Upon the silken cord, or rosary  
Of honeysuckle glittering with dew,  
Which men commended—yet Thou knowest.  
Thou!

Came but a trumpet blast—three words from  
Thee,

At midnight, pealing awful through the cloud  
And sleeping town—and I have followed Thee!  
Doffed splendid silks for greaves and cuisses:  
cast

Aside the playtime stylet for the brand:  
Laid the cross on this passionate heart; and  
shook

The falcon, Pleasure, from the wrist to dart  
And disappear in blue skies! lived pure;  
wrought

For Thy sake; and shall fall, guarding Thy  
tomb!

Shall die on holy earth, and be received  
Among Thy glorious choirs and martyr-saints!  
For well I know that never any more  
Shall I stand in my garden, 'neath the fall  
Of peach flower; take my pleasure in warm  
May;

Sing to the angelot; or pluck the rose  
New-budding; laugh and love in pleasant  
bowers,

'Neath leaf and flower blinding Auria's eyes  
With strings of blossoming vine, fragrant with  
dew,

A spray about her honey-colored locks!  
No more look down upon the quiet town—  
One star, the while, still, clear, in the soft sky!  
I turn my gaze unto the East, the East!  
Life's secret, and the meaning of this world!  
God's blessing on my triumph; and the end!

## SONG.

From my exceeding sorrow spring my songs!  
The wild swan his sweet notes, when death is  
nigh,

Sends up from glittering waters to the sky,  
The while his white breast cleaves the rose  
flushed wave:

The small bird sings her secret nest to save:  
The sweetest songs in pensive splendor spring!  
When opes the soul its quivering, radiant wing!  
From my exceeding sorrow spring my songs!

From my exceeding sorrow spring my songs!  
Sorrow that hath as subtle, fainting breath,  
As fading lilies, bowing to their death!  
Sorrow that makes an awful melody,  
Wild, manifold! as worlds' death-hymns may be!

Of silver rain are made my hushèd strings,  
Past days, a flower's perfume that haunts and  
clings!

From my exceeding sorrow spring my songs!



## FATIMA.

Within a blossomy jasmine bower,  
My love has made her bed!  
Where far and near and overhead  
Nightingales sing, and like a flower  
A rosy star swims, glitters bright  
Within the river light.

On buds and balmy flowers she lies;  
The warm and silent night,  
With floating cloud and amber light,  
Has closed in fragrant sleep her eyes!  
Nightingales sing, far, near, o'erhead,  
Where my love makes her bed!

## DEATH.

Not unknown, unannounced, comest, O Death!  
That last day, when upon the shaking stair  
Thy foot will sound; and with my latest breath,  
I shall arise, and falter, groping, where  
My friend will stand—and fall upon thy breast!  
Thou wilt strike silence through the fiendish  
rage

Of hatred and of evil. I shall rest  
Who tire of all things! sky and sea! shall wage  
No further battle—and I think that so,  
Within thine arms, thy healing kiss will ope  
My eyes; and I shall see there, in a row,  
No angels! but the friends I lost, and hope

Not to behold again—Roland, Conrad,  
And Balthazar—ay, I shall see them all!  
Frank faces, helmed and glitt'ring brows, and  
glad,

Blue eyes bent on me: and ere my lids fall,  
Her who died for me—Leonora, here!  
The closelier to my friend I shall feel prest—  
Then once more night, and tapers' flame, and  
drear

Mutter of shriving priests—then, Heart, thy  
breast!

OH FOUNTAIN! SPARKLING EVER!

Oh fountain! sparkling ever! leaping! gleaming!

Rising in silver streams, in crystal flow!

Pale lilies cluster near your lucid streaming!

Bright flash your waters under the sun's glow,

Oh fountain! sparkling ever! leaping! gleaming!

Oh fountain! rising e'er with melody,

With gentle murmur, from the distant mountain!

'Neath pearled drops spreads the green: the golden bee

Darts o'er your sparkling head: birds hymn you, fountain!

Oh fountain! rising e'er with melody!

**Oh Fountain! Sparkling Ever! 143**

Oh fountain! clear spring from mysterious  
deeps!

Pure are your dazzling waters, murmuring ever!

Your glittering, rising stream, that never sleeps!

Immortal fount! your holy joy ends never!

Oh fountain! clear spring from mysterious  
deeps!

## PSYCHE.

So lovely is the waking day,  
With buds, and blossoms, dew-drops of May!  
So fair is love! and blissful the delight  
Of winds and waves and cloudless heavens  
bright!

Yet all suffice not the fond soul that wings  
Above the sweet content of earthly things:  
And higher still its rising hopes aspire,  
Like streaming stars that fill the heavens with  
fire.

## PROMETHEUS.

## A FRAGMENT.

## SONG OF THE HOURS.

Ye rosy spirits! flee away  
From rocky crag and fearful way,  
The mountain mist, and regions still!  
Below, the world, on plain and hill,  
Is blossoming, in springtide mirth!  
Celestial splendor fills the earth!  
Before the dawn, pales each star's light,  
The fair sun spreads his tresses bright;  
Haste, sisters, through the blushing sky,  
Through highest heaven—O pass by  
The Once Belovèd! earth awaits  
Our coming from dawn's silver gates!



*First Spirit of the Air:*

O come! and with thy pearly drops, thy dew  
Pure, dazzling, touch his burning brow! refresh  
His weary limbs!

*Second Spirit of the Air:*

Our floating veils before  
The radiant sun we will draw—hover o'er  
His head that sinks beneath the quenchless fire.

*Third Spirit of the Air:*

With fragrance of the green earth, balmy breath  
Of roses, and the bowers that have now,  
Alas! forgotten him! I breathe on him.

*Fourth Spirit of the Air:*

Low, sweet and soft! with dreaming falls, and  
tones,  
Of passionate harps and heavenly harmony,  
With tender songs of men, and the first notes  
Of wakening birds, I kneel beside him. Sleep!

O thou belovèd, 'mid thy torture! rest,  
As on the patient earth's green breast! Thy love  
Hath raised men from the earth to heaven: their  
souls  
Rejoice and bless thee! Rest, O suffering one!  
Beneath our gleaming wings spread o'er thy  
head!

*Prometheus:.*

Below in orient, dewy fields of earth,  
Men toil and sleep: above their misty dreams,  
The Gods, within their golden, gleaming halls,  
Smile o'er earth's valleys low—but these racked  
limbs,  
That may not find rest 'neath the springing  
grass,  
Or shut in brazen urn; with icy sleet,  
Keen frost, with snow, and beating storm, and  
wind,  
Are fired through with fierce pain! beneath the  
sun

Shrink, burning! shiver 'neath chill dews! O  
pain!

Immortal anguish! and undying woe!  
And life immortal as breath of the God  
Who bound these mighty limbs, where light-  
enings play,  
And awful thunder rolls along the deep,  
Beneath the shivering stars! immortal pain!

*First Spirit of the Air:*

O hear! up from the deep, what voices rise?

*Second Spirit of the Air:*

The sea hushes its mighty sound—O hear!

*First Ocean Nymph:*

Up from the vast and misty depths, we rise!  
From windless caverns 'neath the billow, paved  
With veined gold, and shell, and ocean pearl.  
Up, with our long locks crowned with white sea-  
flower,  
We rise!

*Second Ocean Nymph:*

With breath of spray, and dazzling light  
And ocean music, come we!

*Third Ocean Nymph:*

Wild sea-birds

Before us dart! the crystal wave shines clear  
Beneath the radiant sun: our white limbs gleam  
Through its gold spangled light! From hidden  
caves

Where bee nor bud nor tree is—from still bowers  
Beneath the foam, we rise! with music sweet  
Of voices soft and aery as the moan  
Of silver sounding shell, we come! Prome-  
theus!

*Voice of the Earth:*

Within my dreams I stir! I hear afar  
Aërial voices singing! tones divine!  
Yet heard I, trembling to my shuddering heart,  
An awful voice of anguish! agony

Of him born of my fertile bosom, loved  
Of Earth, the Titan. O let me no more  
Those fearful murmurs hearken from the  
          heights,  
The solitary mountains! keener grows  
The ancient pain of Earth!

## SONG OF SPIRITS.

Clear moon, that gazest on the sleeping earth!  
Fair visions seest of woods, crystal dews  
On new-sprung flowers, rivers, seas, and birth  
Of living, radiant fountains, faint mists whose  
White skirts thy keen rain pierces, isles of light,  
And dreaming beauty, 'mid the forests wild,  
Boughs laden with gold orbs, and blossoms  
          bright  
Leaf-folded, streams where lilies lift their mild  
Light, pastoral fields, and cities, 'neath thy  
          sphere  
Ships on their lonely way! thou radiance high  
And fair! the harmonies of earth dost hear;

the aery echoes of the unfathomed sky;  
And solemn sound that down the heavens rings,  
From glittering spheres, and rush of mighty  
wings!

## IANTHE'S SONG.

The nightingale, beneath the moon  
That floods with splendor all the quiet vales,  
Spends in sweet melody his passionate sighs!  
What joy is his! under the golden skies,  
To sing his love, that dreams and dares and fails!

What love is his that breaks his heart  
With music? woos he some spirit of night?  
Deep-hearted rose? or pearlèd lily born  
With the soft radiance of the silent morn,  
Dew-gemmed, with aery leaves of delicate light?

The nightingale in melody  
Pours forth his raptured heart! O still thy  
    strain,  
Sweet spirit! or teach me thy minstrelsy,  
Thy passion musical, that Love may be  
A listener to my ecstasy and pain!



## AFTER DEATH.

Great mercy 'twere! if we might know  
Whither their solemn spirits go  
Who, living, shared our hearths and love!

Within all silent, mournful places,  
We think to see their haunting faces:  
Their constant bosoms obdurate prove!

And feet that ne'er afar have gone,  
Now, strange and secret ways are on!

## ANDROMEDA.

Up from the lucent wave and sea-foam, rose  
A blunt head, hideous, gold-gleaming through  
The pale-green billow: shone one fiery eye  
Upon the maiden's shrinking beauty hung,  
Helpless, on the white rock above the deep,  
Sea-swept, and down-drawn by the swirling  
surge;

Her shuddering, trembling body, starting eyes,  
And piteous mouth agape in palsied fear,  
Fronting the monster, lidless eyed. It rose,  
Lashing in diamond spray the ocean mist,  
With glossy coils and lambent track upon  
The deep; and oped its dragon jaws above  
Its prey: but ere it seized upon the maid—  
Wrathful, the hero raised his dripping shield,  
Whereon Medusa's head, a horror hung,

Within its twisting folds of serpent locks ;  
And with one glance of those appalling eyes  
Slew the sea-fiend that dropped, a lifeless wreath,  
Down glassy waves ! down to the beryl caves !  
And surged the waters in huge waves, reared  
high

In hollow billow—then ebbd from the shore ;  
While far and shrill from ocean's glaucous  
bowers,

The pearly sea-caves of the blue-haired nymphs,  
Rose faint wails of sea voices from the deeps !  
Then Perseus loosed the maiden from her chains,  
And cherishing her chilled hand in his, led  
His love, rejoicing, back to life and light !

## SONG.

Is it the lark that sings from golden fields,  
'Mid pearls of May, and buds of dawn? or  
yields

His song unto the dreaming nightingale,  
When sinking from bright heaven, his sweet  
notes fail?

Hush, hush, my soul! it is the lark! it is the  
lark!

Is it the dawn shines on me, from the skies?  
Or Love, playing within her sacred eyes  
Waking from paly lids? where lilies blow,  
Rose-buds bloom soft, amid her virgin snow!  
Hush, hush, my heart! it is the dawn! it is the  
dawn!

May Love dwell in that heavenly Paradise?  
Or stir the balmy buds with longing sighs?  
O tremble, heart! for angels guard that light!  
The garden of her beauty from thy sight!  
Hush, hush, my heart! thou may'st not sigh!  
thou may'st not sigh!

## IDYLS.

## I.

## AGLAE.

We spoke of Love, of memories, and flowers,  
The first lights of the sky: and at the word  
Others sighed, gently smiled, and spoke at large,  
Sweet thoughts and quiet fancies: but you  
hushed,

You said no word; yet listening, I heard  
Sounds as of bees murmuring 'mid sweet flowers,  
Or humming of swift wings, or throb of strings!  
They were the awakened echoes of your heart!

## II.

## TREASURE-TROVE.

From out the heaped wealth in your arms, you  
dropped  
One lucid blossom I reclaimed. You stopped;

With halting foot, swayed, gazing back on me—  
Then, smiling, passed: a faint rose momentarily  
Stained your white neck, beneath its curls. This  
    flower,  
That smile are mine from out your heart's rich  
    dower!

## III.

## IN AFTER YEARS.

Shaking the sparkling dew-drops from their  
    locks,  
The rosy Hours circle my faint head:  
"Where are the roses once wreathed 'round your  
    brows?"  
They ask. "Alas!" I answer. "Where is that  
Love, Dirce, that you deemed oblivion ne'er  
Should bear away, on slow, unresting stream?  
It flows, unwearied, to the farther shore;  
And love and hope have gone down that dim  
    tide!"



## IV.

## MYRTIS.

Like sunshine on the grass, upon my breast  
Her smiles fall: when the sun in cloudbank  
dips,  
Her frowns are sweeter far than kisses prest,  
Folded in splendor down on perfect lips!

## BIRD'S LOVE.

Gold-crowned king of the birds, I sing!  
Answers my mate, from rosy bough:  
'Mid bud and breeze and blossoming,  
And gusty leaves that toss and shine,  
Her tender notes still answer mine.  
Love, shall we nest? for May has walked  
In the green woods; with the thrush talked;  
And woven dewy wreaths of flowers  
From star-strown ways and wild-rose bowers:  
And each white, blossomy orchard tree  
'O'erflows with hidden melody  
From fragrant spray and orbéd drop, bright,  
Glittering, rose-round, to the light.

## LAMENT.

Through the dark night, my feet are led  
Towards thee! my heart yearns to thee! light,  
Mine eyes desire not—but thy face!  
O hear me, for all hope has fled  
Since the great sun went down, and night  
Covers my head with darkness: grace  
I ask not, save near thee to die!  
To feel thy tears upon my face,  
When silence ends the heart's last sigh!

## SIEGFRIED IN THE FOREST.

O'er the rims of the blue hills, passed the knights  
Into the forest old; where branches low  
Brushed lofty casque, and a stray sunbeam shone  
On glittering greaves, and silver bugle, hung  
From jeweled baldric. 'Neath their mailed feet,  
rose

Faint perfume of bruised fern, and moss, and  
buds,

Milk-white, sprung in the hidden forest brake;  
And fluttered, to tree-tops, a dove; and through  
The arches dim, fled fast the timid deer,  
Breaking their woodland covert; with a glint  
Of golden horns: hushed was the rustling leaf  
Of mighty branching oak, and murmuring pine.  
Slow, passed they, bearing home the hero, slain!

High, on his hollow, carven shield, he lay,  
Death-white and silent! in his mighty side,  
The spear wound gaped; and swayed the listless  
    head,  
With brow raised to the sky. Through the dim  
    wood,  
They went; with solemn voices on the wind,  
In lamentation! ancient funeral chant!

LOVE DOTH NOT SHINE THROUGH  
TEARS!

Love doth not shine through tears!  
No part has it in leaden care, and fears!  
A breeze rocking the bees and blossoms, light  
Of Beauty's eyes, a wingèd spirit bright,  
The folding-star of dawn, an aery dream  
Lost with the bright morn's quivering, rosy  
gleam  
Is Love! too radiant, visionary fair!  
For numbing, human tears, earth-born despair!

## THE POT OF BASIL.

With open pane to let the warm night in,  
She slept. Her balmy breathing gently stirred  
Her tender breast; where ebbèd and flowèd the  
life

Dream hushèd 'neath the clear orb of the moon,  
And fragrant breeze from honeyed flowers.

Across

Her lattice lay the blossoming, airy length  
Of some unearthly plant, with veinèd leaf  
Dew wet and sparkling, and crownèd with a  
bloom

Strange, swaying, starry-bright! with golden  
heart,

And burning eye! a shining lamp of dreams,  
A delicate perfume upon the air



Calm, odorous; a faery blossom sprung  
By night—but O the strange and sad sound  
came

From its vibrating leaves! with passionate moan  
Filling that chamber sweet! until awake  
The dreamer shuddered from her silent rest;  
And in the magic moonshine clasped it close,  
And sighed, and kissed its flower face, with fall  
Of ceaseless tears! its soft, mild light, profound,  
Shone on her tremulous beauty: its fair head  
Resting, star-bright, upon her frozen heart!

## THE ENCHANTED GARDEN.

There was a garden all of dewy flowers  
Grew, fresh, unknown to man: there lilies rang  
Delicate chimes of snowy bells; 'neath showers  
And clear dews burst the musky rose; and  
sprang

All lovely, aery blossoms that smelt sweet,  
Or had a honey heart, or dew-drop light  
Glittering on a starry flower-face meet  
For guest-birds leaving sky and cloudbank  
white.

It had a flush of orchard bloom in May;  
And gilded insect craft of faery trim;  
The tented daisy, silver star of day.  
Long, laughing faery creatures in the dim

And cool dwelt in my garden, lone, alone!  
In dewy stillness, till—Love! thou didst come!  
Broke through the hollies; found the bowers  
unknown:

The fountain sinks, the nightingale is dumb:  
The trembling heart of the enchanted close  
Waits for thy hand to pluck the midmost rose.

## THE MASTER.

All was snow-cold, flower-perfect in my art  
Until I read your script; unrolled the length  
Of fine close manuscript. Words whelmed me?

    nay,

It was yourself came, with a trumpet blare,  
On the majestic, sea-like roll of verse:  
A wave that washed away my plotted flowers,  
With a wild salt breath! shriek of flapping  
    birds!

A storm o'erflowed the limpid springs of life!  
I stood in ruined fields and looked afar,  
Lost in immensity—but stars o'erhead.  
What was that music? Came the answer—  
    “Love!”

## SUNKEN CHIMES.

Soft, clear and slow!  
With mournful chime,  
Up from sea-deeps,  
The pearl-strown caves  
Where dim light sleeps  
From emerald waves,  
Where no winds blow,  
Or glist'ning flow'r  
Springs, from the tow'r  
Beneath the sea,  
Ring hauntingly  
The bells below—  
Soft, clear and slow!

The sea-nymphs list;  
And rise, and lean  
O'er the blue deep,  
The watery main,  
Where sword-fish leap;  
And hover, fain,  
Up from the mist,  
To lure the white  
Sea-snake crowned bright!  
While far, far down,  
From the lost town  
The bells below,  
Ring soft and slow!

## LYRICS.

## I.

What gifts are brought thee, Love?  
Pale roses, odorous boughs,  
Field flowers, golden harvestings,  
The hyacinth that early springs,  
Ay, and pomegranate breathing East,  
Wild honey from the Muses' feast,  
Myrtle and laurel, budding vine,  
The bramble-rose and sweet woodbine;  
These are thy gifts, Love! What do I  
Bring thee of beauty 'neath the sky?  
Alas! I bring my tears!

What songs are brought thee, Love?  
Sweet piping from each down,



The trembling, bridal melody  
Of merry wedding-minstrelsy,  
And songs of maytime blossoming,  
When lilies blow, and skylarks sing,  
When heavens are blue, and fields are gay,  
And bees among the blossoms stray;  
These are thy songs, Love! What, with string  
Of viol, do I to thee bring?  
Alas, I bring my sighs!

## II.

I saw where wrangling each with pettish cries,  
The infant Hope and Eros strove for thee:  
Alas! thine were Love's bow and golden arrows;  
Did'st turn thee from the other's proffered  
flowers.  
Thy frowns chid one babe into tears—still clung  
His rosy playmate to thy skirts, for through  
That harshness, shone thy beauty like the sun  
Emerging from the drops of crystal shower.

## III.

Love hath a need of e'en the smallest flower,  
Of bright blue skies, and breeze-blown dewy  
    shower  
From gleaming clouds, and star of evening hour.

It hath a need of memories and sighs,  
The old delight of childhood's brooks and skies,  
And garden scent and bloom and butterflies.

For Love will each pure flower its star disclose,  
Each silver daisy turns a scented rose,  
In common paths the faery fern seed grows.



THE COMBAT WITH THE DRAGON.  
(HEROIC POEM.)

PERSONS.

Sigurd, Olaf, Norse knights.

Erica, a noble maiden.

Helga, mother of Olaf.

First Huntsman, Second Huntsman, Knights  
and Maidens.

THE COMBAT WITH THE DRAGON.

HEROIC POEM.

SCENE.—A wild, rocky pass of a mountain,  
leading up to densely wooded heights above.

ENTER TWO HUNTSMEN.

*First Huntsman:*

The morning star is faded.

*Second Huntsman:*

The faint sky

Glimmers with hues of rose and pearl: mists fly  
O'er the high peaks, before the breeze of dawn:  
Voices dispel the silence.

*First Huntsman:*

This way must

He pass who to the combat with the Dragon  
Advances. O'er those solemn heights, and by

## 180      The Combat With the Dragon.

High, dizzy paths, up to a barren crag,  
Pierced by a fearful cavern, lies the way:  
Great rocks stand at the opening of that cave,  
Bone-strewn, wind-swept! the hero, at its mouth,  
Must wind his horn to bring the fearful foe,  
Foaming and breathing death, its winding  
                 length  
Rustling its scales upon the cavern floor,  
Out to his challenge.

### *Second Huntsman:*

Dauntless courage has  
The hero! thus to struggle with a foe  
Than man a thousandfold more terrible!

### *First Huntsman:*

Its eyes shoot blinding sparks! its shining har-  
                 ness  
Turns spear or blade—invulnerable its length  
Save at the heart! its fearful, blasting breath  
O'ercomes the senses! its fierce talons tear



Through armor and stout helm, and break the  
shaft

Of lance as lightly as winds bend a reed!  
Conquering, it closes in its dread embrace—  
Crushing all life; or hurling down the abyss—  
Both steed and rider: and to its grim terror  
It adds the soft persuasion of a voice  
Of magical and dulcet pleading; tones  
Of the entreating child, or woman shriek  
Of pain and fear. It can discourse sweet music  
To those who harken to its guile: a song  
Like that of the enchantress who o'er tide  
And running foam, beckons the mariner  
To her isle gemmed with bright buds, flush of  
rose,

And riot of gold blossom, bee haunted,  
And fragrant lily-cups. O terrible  
The struggle with this monster that the hero  
Prepares for, e'en now!

*Second Huntsman:*

Who is this great champion?

## 182     The Combat With the Dragon.

*First Huntsman:*

Knight Olaf; who to save the blighted land,  
A virgin, pure and blameless, comes unto  
Our aid.

*Second Huntsman:*

God nerve his arm; and may the hosts  
That wait on noble deeds attend his way!  
Harken! what strange, far sound above the  
                 heights!  
Faint and yet clear!

*First Huntsman:*

The Dragon! ah, the Dragon!  
The hour approaches.

(Exeunt.)

ENTER OLAF.

*Olaf:* Clothed all in purity and prayer, I come,  
Thou mighty foe! and this day that dawns clear  
Shall see thy death-fall. In my vigil, came  
A great voice o'er me, through the mighty dome,  
While incense floated in the tapers' glow,

And rosy lights beat down upon my head,  
And blinding shafts of quivering, dazzling light;  
Saying—"By thy long prayer—sorrow endured  
Since first thy mother bore thee, on the isle,  
The misty isle deserted on the sea,  
Where drifted that wrecked vessel that brought  
her—

The tender victim of the brother kings!  
And her scant following tried, to its strange  
shore

Shelving, sea-swept and shining, to the deep!  
By thy adventure and quests manifold,  
Thy patient service, I command thee gird  
Thy youthful vigor for this last great trial!  
Thou shall't prevail! adventure thou thy life,  
And lose what thou shall't find!" Thou mother  
earth!

Escape thou not my feet! but bear me firm  
Through all the gliding twists of my great foe:  
Inspire my limbs with thy endurance! Winds,  
Bear far from me the monster's noxious breath

184      The Combat With the Dragon.

And blinding vapors, suffocating blasts!  
Blow clear from the white North and dissipate  
The arid air! Great shield of Heaven, thou sun!  
Send down thy golden, streaming, shining beams  
Within the cavern's shadows, and disperse  
The green and golden mists of sorcery!  
Winged monarch of the aery skies, gold-eyed,  
Clang me to victory! I know not hate,  
Nor fear, nor scorn. Before my blade shall  
    fall  
Evil, prone in dust. I come, thou foe! (blows  
    bugle).  
High in thy misty fastnesses, hear thou  
My challenge!

(Exit up the pass.)

ENTER SIGURD.

*Sigurd:* He lingers not, but rushes on his fate!  
Strange spinners 'neath the branching tree of  
    Heaven,  
Decide this hour: I wait your will. If he  
Return back from that fearful cavern—here

He must confront me: for no man shall live  
Who shames me with his nobleness. Shall I  
See him the slayer of that foe I shunned,  
In fear? I—boldest heart and whitest knight  
Of all the court! and watch his bridals with  
That loveliest of maidens, Erica,  
My long belovèd, whom, with patient service,  
I wooed to my arms? Cursèd be the heart  
That failed! the arm that sank! when he ap-  
peared,  
Heaven-sent and shining in his youthful beauty,  
From far adventure in the magic East,  
Where the gold banner flies o'er milk-white  
sands;  
And reft my kingship o'er men from me! I  
Dared all trials, and knew not that I could falter!  
Ere that hour: but if he the Dragon slay,  
Great honor 'twere if I might o'ercome him,  
The conqueror. My glory I will wrest  
Back from him now, or die! (faint bugle blast,  
above). Harken, the challenge!

186      **The Combat With the Dragon.**

The struggle has begun! O Shame that fires  
My heart aid me! and Love that sees its loss!  
Give back my manhood, hero! we cannot  
Be both the noblest, both the mightiest.  
This arm shall all decide. I will possess  
Her! free my soul—or die! Wins he? or has  
He fled? No sound blows down from the far  
                 heights,  
Where broods a magic fear. He hath drunk  
                 deep  
Of battle now, of blood and tears: a silence  
Lies on all things, on wing and leaf and stream—  
They await the issue, bliss or bane: and clouds  
Roll up the golden sky, and passionate light,  
A shadow on the rich vales, hung with flowers,  
White foam of blossom: the mysterious peaks  
Darken. Has he fallen? or risen above  
Our heads, in solemn majesty? No sound,  
No cry of the great monster's agony  
Descends, nor bruit of conflict: melody  
Of far enchantment that many a knight



Has heard above his dazzled, drowsy brain—  
And passed to death in that wild, drifting music.  
O shame! O deathful sloth and fear! I wait.

(Withdraws at side.)

ENTER OLAF.

*Olaf:* My brow touches the skies! O thou low  
world,

Bleeding and breathless, I await the shock  
Of countless foes; my breast the bulwark 'gainst  
Their fury. Blow, thou bugle! north, south,  
west,

East! victory! to kings of distant lands,  
I have drunk deep of battle, and have won.  
Blow, bugle! wake the echoes—victory!

*Sigurd:* Thy armor hacked and dented hangs:  
the dust

Of conflict, with blood, darkens thy fair locks:  
Red drops fall fast from many wounds, the  
marks



188     **The Combat With the Dragon.**

Of ravening claws, and tearing fangs! The  
monster—

Lies it low?

*Olaf:*     It has perished. Nevermore,  
Shall it prey on fair flocks and hapless shepherd;  
And darken, with its greed, the sunbright land.  
Up the wild steep, I took my way, by lone,  
Untrodden paths above the mountain mists,  
The woods and falling streams and dim ravine,  
Till reached I the grim lair of the dread worm;  
A cavern deep and gloomy, 'round whose mouth  
Lay bleaching bones of victims; a dark gulf  
That seemed the sloping entrance down to Hell!  
No light saw I in that dim place; until,  
Resigning my soul, blew I three clear blasts  
Of bugle, echoing to the hills: then grew  
A strange and shining splendor in that cave,  
And with a sound as of dead leaves adrift  
Within the golden, autumn woods, or hiss  
Of surf on gleaming beach, a coiling length,  
With fearful front, and eye of basilisk,

Issued from darkness—and the struggle closed!  
Vainly I hurled the spear, and smote with blade  
Against that lustrous harness, still unharmed;  
And at each stroke with bellowing roar, it blew  
A vapor horrible about my head,  
Of sulphur fume, and poison virulent;  
And lashed its dread length o'er me. Once,  
down-thrown,

I looked for death! but struggled, seeking e'er  
The weak spot in that fearful, glittering mail;  
Weak with my hurts, and shadowed o'er with  
dread!

At last, snapt lay the spear, and hacked the  
sword:

I 'scaped the shock, and once more, onward  
rushed—

Felt o'er me close the dripping fangs—sprang  
back

From out its clutches—slipped and fell! but saw  
That instant near me the throb of its heart,  
Amid the winding, twisting, countless folds;

190      The Combat With the Dragon.

And ere it fastened on me, drove the blade  
Up to the hilt within the monster's breast!  
The air grew dark; the fading, clouded skies  
Hung dim above the awful cry it sent  
Up in its anguish: then with bubbling blood,  
It passed in music wonderful and strange!  
Like the white swan that o'er the lucent wave,  
Drifts, singing, in wild radiance, to its death,  
Upon the rosy waters of the lake!  
Limp lay the coils! dull, lifeless, in the sun;  
Their glittering hues, and elfin lustre dead,  
The gliding lights of purest emerald,  
And golden brede of its enchanted mail;  
And all remained was hideous, when life  
Had fled the Fiend. With panting breath, and  
    pain,  
I rose from earth, and dragged my weary limbs  
Down the steep pass; down to the happy fields!  
Till o'er the shining hills and vales, I sent  
The bugle music of my victory!

The Combat With the Dragon. 191

*Sigurd:* Mighty art thou, Olaf: but hast not  
quelled

Thy fiercest foe. My honor lies low in  
The dust of thy great conflict. I am knight  
And hero, and I struggle to the death  
For my lost fame. I charge thee, by thy oaths,  
To yield me combat: for by my faith, shall't  
Not stir hence, victor of the monster dead;  
Till thou hast tried my manhood! battled for  
Thy glory!

*Olaf:* Never have I striven for  
Mere petulance, and passion of the blood:  
But followed noble deeds.

*Sigurd:* Yet must thou prove  
Thee now, against my sorrow and despair!

*Olaf:* Wilt thou assay me, bleeding from my  
quest?

The elfin blood still crimsoning my brand?  
All glorious with my conquest, and my strife;  
The storm and mist of battle? and dost think

192      **The Combat With the Dragon.**

To overthrow me who have won, and shine,  
Glitt'ring in fellowship of knights?

*Sigurd:*     Dost hear  
The faint chant rises from the distant vale?  
The noble maiden, Erica, wends hither:  
Her maidens follow, 'mid the flowers and breeze,  
Shining o'er meads a-flame with colored buds—  
A vision 'mid the rosy dawn and light.  
She leads, with holy care, thy mother here,  
To hail thee hero.    Never will I see  
Her in thy arms! Flame from the ashes of  
My grey despair, I spring against thee! Gird  
Thee! arm and front me, Olaf, sword to sword!  
And let her wed the victor in the fight—  
Strike!

*Olaf:*    So wilt make a foe of me who should  
Be bound to thee with vows of brotherhood  
Closest and noblest, of pure faith—I close  
With thee!

(They fight.    Sigurd falls.)

*Sigurd:* Christ! I am overcome!

*Olaf:* For thou

Hast striven wickedly. May'st thou repent;  
This hour of passion past. I harm thee not.  
Heaven make thee worthy of thy vows: subdue  
Thy flame of pride to pure obedience.

ENTER ERICA LEADING HELGA; AND MAIDENS.

*Helga:* He lives! and God has heard my  
prayers that rose,

Ceaselessly, all the silent night, afar  
In the rich city of the King: has heard  
The slow tears falling from my agèd eyes,  
In patient rain; the anguish stifled lest  
Complaint mingle with prayer! He lives! nor  
must

I dwell, a lonely heart, beside a hearth  
Lonely and childless—hearing voices, past,  
A music on the wind of autumn days,  
Rising, failing, about the ruinous towers;  
Old footsteps echoing in chambers dim,



194      **The Combat With the Dragon.**

And ghostly corridors, 'mid falling rain!  
He lives: and God gains glory through his life!  
His faithful knight.

*Erica:*      O Prince, thy prize am I,  
In thy great lists, awarded by the King:  
And so thou holdest me, a simple maid,  
A boon worthy thy taking—I am thine,  
O Prince!

*Olaf:*      Thy blessing, mother, on thy child!  
Let thy love crown my quest; be greatest gain  
Of glory for the task completed, that  
Shall shine gold on the shield giv'n by the King:  
And live in all high places, when I die!  
In burning glory of the warrior-saints;  
In emblem and device; and songs of bards  
Recounting tales of knighthood. Lo, 'tis done!

ENTER KNIGHTS.

No more shall fear lurk in green field and mead,  
For shepherd, or the tiller of the soil:



The Combat With the Dragon. 195

Or forest pathways hold a fiercer prey  
Than the deer of the wild woods, and the deeps.  
The land is freed; and all the ways are clear  
From wood to sea; and cleansed the fearful toils,  
O'er cloudy peaks with its enchantments hung,  
Where lay the monster grim! Knights, brother-  
    hearts,

Who hold my honor, yours, the deed is done!  
The quest completed! I have slain the Dragon!

*Knights* (clashing their spears against their  
    shields): Hail, Olaf, Olaf! hail!









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